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# AN IRON-BOUND CITY:

OR,

Five Months of Peril and Privation.

BY

JOHN AUGUSTUS O'SHEA,

AUTHOR OF

"LEAVES FROM THE LIFE OF A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT," ETC.

"A great and terrible World-Event, supremely beneficent and yet supremely terrible, upon which all Europe is waiting with abated breath . . . will be memorable to all the world for another thousand years."

THOMAS CARLYLE *on the Siege of Paris.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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# AN IRON-BOUND CITY.

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## CHAPTER I.

The Great Sortie at Last—The Picture on the River-Bank—Passage of the Marne—Plan of the Field—The Enemy's Outposts are Driven in—Surprise of Champigny—The Struggle for the Railway Ridge—The New Artillery—The French Take a Redoubt—Storming of Montmesly—General la Charrière Mortally Wounded—Repulse of the Zouaves—"Renault of the Rearguard"—A Diabolic Concert—"Use your Bayonets, Men!"—Charge of the Enemy's Dragoons—Night Stops the Slaughter—The Bivouac on the Field—A Dance midst the Dead—Agonies of the Wounded.

THERE were two theories to account for the unfortunate rise in the Marne, one laying the blame on sudden freshets up the river, the other on the crafty lifting of dams by the enemy. The former was the correct one; but accidents of the kind should have entered into the calculations of a prescient

commander. The French had no alternative but to try again. But they had lost a day, and that day was all-important. The troops which had been massed at Vincennes preparatory to the crossing were led back to the Polygon and the plain of St. Maur, where they were ordered to rest for the night. Additional boats were brought from Paris and drawn up under cover of the walls of the Faisanderie redoubt. At nightfall on Tuesday the sappers began accumulating the planks for the flooring of the bridges on the banks of the Marne. At three in the morning the preliminaries were finished, the boats were dragged to the riverside, and the reveille was sounded in the bivouac. A signal-gun boomed from the fort of Nogent. Immediately the voice of the cannon was heard from the line of works on the south-eastern outskirts from Rosny to Charenton. Now it was the guns at Gravelle that blazed and thundered ; now those of Fontenay higher up ; scarce had a flash, like a port-fire, with accompanying roar, shot out into the night above the wood of Vincennes, when the one was repeated, and the other re-echoed lower down. The noise

was deafening, and almost continuous. While it was at its height the troops were stealthily moved to a position on the edge of the Marne behind the islet of Fanac. The scene was picturesque in the extreme—such a scene as Rembrandt or Salvator would have loved to paint. There were in it effects from the “Night-Watch,” and others, that recalled the weird touches of the Neapolitan. The long ranks of Mobiles in their bluish-grey capotes; the Linesmen with their *képis* and trousers of scarlet; the cavaliers of the Military Train outlined boldly on the gloom, in their white cloaks; and the veterans of the Artillery, wrapped in their heavy dark greatcoats, standing by their horses’ heads—all made such diversity of colour, as the lurid reflections from large bonfires on the river-bank fell upon them, as would have filled a student of *chiar’-oscuro* with ecstasy. But those honest fellows were ranged there in interests other than those of art. They were about to engage in a struggle in which many of them would find their death; the fortunes of their country were in their keeping, and they were stern and silent, as if conscious of the awful responsibility.

There were no shouts, no singing, but the men had a steady, confident air. In about an hour the boats were thrown across the two arms of the Marne, and communication by the bridge of Joinville, which had been cut at the beginning of the investment, was re-established. In spite of the heavy firing, some of the enemy's advanced sentries remained on the opposite bank, and sent an occasional bullet whizzing in the midst of the pontoon train. Two marines were wounded; but, beyond that, no harm was done, nor was there any serious attempt to disturb the workmen. Indeed, so prudently were the points chosen for the crossing, that they could not be reached by the German batteries. A portion of Blanchard's division, which led, stepped alertly over the bridge of Joinville, and threw out a curtain of skirmishers to ascertain if the ground on the other side was clear. As soon as all was reported right, some artillery waggons were sent across first to test the strength of the pontoons, and then the field-guns and the batteries of mitrailleuses proceeded methodically to follow them. This, one of the most ticklish of operations—the passage of a river

in presence of an enemy—was accomplished with admirable order. To the cannonade from the forts its success must be attributed. As the various regiments got to the other bank, they debouched on a very extended line, and advanced to the posts assigned to them. The general action covered a front spreading from the hill of Champigny as its base on the right, round by the plateau of Villiers, to the hamlet of Brie-sur-Marne. There is a bifurcation on the road a little outside the village of Joinville-le-Pont, and two splendid highways branch off, that to the right passing by Champigny, that to the left by Brie, forking off to Villiers. Between them, but rather in the Villiers direction, lies the track of the rail to Mulhouse. Directly in front of the French, as they debouched, was a series of somewhat exposed undulations, affording small shelter to troops except a few vineyards and an odd row of trees; but beyond them were a limekiln and some plaster quarries, which a good officer could turn to his advantage for defence. Behind Champigny is Cœuilly, with its park on a rising ground; and behind that again, but more to the left as one

looks from Vincennes, is the wood of St. Martin. To the south of Cœuilly, on a hill commanding a portion of the Marne, is Chennevières, where the enemy had formidable batteries. At Ormesson and Bonneuil below it, following the curve of the river, he was also strongly established. His position to the north was guaranteed by batteries at Villiers, at Gournay higher up, and at Chelles higher still, at the other side of the Strasburg line of rail. This outline of the battle-field will help the reader to the knowledge that the French had all their work before them.

At Solferino, where there were about 135,000 men engaged on each side, the front spread over thirty miles; and here, where the French had close on 170,000 rank and file, and 300 guns in line, the extent of ground occupied by the action was necessarily large too, and any attempt to give a description of the fight must be confessedly inadequate and incomplete. I will confine myself, therefore, to narrating in a general way the features of the day, adding such traits of personal heroism (which, after all, are the interesting points of a battle-picture) as furnished topic for common conversation.

A column of troops of the Line and provincial Mobiles (Burgundians, I imagine) took the road first, and tripped along at a quick march. They carried neither knapsack nor tenting equipage, but simply a haversack crammed with six days' provisions, and the few cooking utensils absolutely needful, each man his share. The morning was dry and cold—that sharp sort of weather which makes a smart step-out pleasant and bracing. As they got forward a little beyond the bifurcation, the order was given to deploy, and they scattered, by sections, over the fields, green with crops of potatoes and turnip-tops, that stretched between Champigny and the viaduct of the Mulhouse Railway over the road to Brie. The outposts of the enemy, who were mostly Saxons in this locality, were waking up, and took some random pops at the advancing ranks of Frenchmen; but they were evidently doing this merely to gain time, and were falling back upon their immediate reserves. Some of them stood and fired from the plantation to the left, and others looked wicked for a moment, to judge by the quick puffs from a copse known as the

Bois l'Huillier; but the chassepot began to talk too, and "Forward" was the word with the men who used it. The deadliest risk the attacking force had to run was from sharpshooters crouching behind the walls on the route to the right, in which they had knocked loopholes for the reception of their French visitors. A well-sustained fire was kept up, too, from the houses at the entrance of the village of Champigny. But the gunners in the forts were watching, and pitched percussion-shells over the heads of their countrymen, which burst right in the midst of the Saxon marksmen, who did not wait for notice to quit to be served too often. Off they scudded, the greater part of them by the Brie road, never crying stop till they got to the other side of the railway, and put the ridge of the line between themselves and their enemy. A division of the French held on to the right, and Champigny was soon teeming with their uniforms. Once in the streets they broke into the houses, and began searching the cellars. Here they unearthed a certain number of poor devils of Saxons, and made them prisoners at the bayonet's point, 'mid



eries of exultation at this first fruit of victory. I am wrong in calling these Saxons "poor devils," for the generality of them seemed easily reconciled to their lot, and well pleased, on the whole, to have done with "glorious war," with its pomps and prides of semi-starvation and sudden death. The captives were sent to the château of Vincennes, in custody of a portion of their captors; another portion held the village, and a third, the larger, moved off with artillery to occupy the range of heights knitting Chennevières to la Queue-en-Brie, a cluster of houses a couple of miles to the south. The object of this movement was to compel the enemy to show himself on the table-ground.

While the positions on the proper right were thus carried with comparative ease, the main body of the French forces, which had followed the leading column, had been deployed as it crossed the river and faced straight to the railway. This was an important point to seize, as the track runs parallel with the advance, and might be made useful as a line of retreat. It is protected by pretty high banks on both sides, which made it dangerous if the

enemy could hold to it as a defensive base, and on the other hand most valuable as base from which to operate against him. The road to Villiers-sur-Marne (over which the railway passes) runs in line with and is commanded by it for some distance, which was another serious circumstance, as Villiers was one of the objective points of the sortie. There was nothing for it but to carry the railway at any hazard, and at it the French went with a will. But the Saxons and the Würtembergers who were lurking under the banks were alive to the importance of the position, had made up their minds to sell it dearly, and were chuckling, doubtless, at the welcome they had in store for the French. The term "railway" is employed that the reader may be the better able mentally to map the set of the land; but it would be a mistake to suppose that it was a mere road for steam travelling that the French had before them. The enemy had not been idle while he was here. Taking that road as a foundation to start from, he had made it so strong, by the help of earthworks in advance of every device in trench and mound and loopholed breast-

work bristling with field-pieces, that Todleben himself would have smiled with satisfaction, and called it good. This was the hard nut Ducrot had to crack, one of the serious obstacles he had warned his soldiers they would have to meet at the very outset; but Ducrot has iron in his blood, and the order was still "Forward!" It was now about eight o'clock. The series of defences extended from Cœuilly, to which the flank of the assailants was presented. A sort of redoubt near the limekiln due north of Champigny, and masked by the plaster-quarries, might be considered as its centre. As the French line advanced, a gust of smoke burst from this redoubt; the renowned German artillery rung out defiance, and some of the thoughtless boys who were going to their first great battle reeled, and stained the dew on the grass with their life-blood. The baptism of fire for many of them was administered *in articulo mortis*. As the first victims lay posturing convulsively on the ground, the field-guns unlimbered; the moment had come at last to try what virtue was in the new artillery, on which so much confidence was built. A critical moment it

was; the hearts of the oldest soldiers there thrilled with anxiety. It was known that the gunners did not like their new pieces as well as those they had been accustomed to, but the suspense was not long. Almost from the first discharge it was evident that the French guns were superior to the German, and most admirably were they served. Every shot goes to its mark and crashes through the hostile defences; in less than an hour and a quarter the breastworks crumble away like crushed gingerbread under the shock of projectiles, and the splinters of the exploding shells whirr over the trenches. Suddenly the French artillery draws off and moves to the right to join in the attack on Cœuilly, and the infantry, who had been lying in wait behind during the cannonade, start up and rush to the assault of the damaged redoubt. But the German gunners had not quitted it, and receive the charging ranks with a perfect broadside, before which they stagger and shrink back dismayed. Again the officers, rallying their men and waving their swords overhead, lead them to the attack; but the same tactic is repeated with the same result. At this

moment the German fire slackens, and a confused stir is noticed behind the guns. What can it mean ?

The action is getting serious on the Prussian left ; the gunners have received orders to fall back to the plateau of Villiers. While the French are hesitating, half-bewildered, the horses are quickly tackled to the field-pieces in the redoubt, and gallop off the greater portion of the battery. The officers of the column of assault detect what is going on, and for the third time challenge their men to follow them, and show the way with an encouraging shout. The young battalions respond to the call, and press forward yet again, teeth set and brows knit, their levelled bayonets pointing to the foe. This time they persevere, springing over the ruins of the redoubt, break into its midst as the Germans are fastening the trails to the limbers, stab, shoot, and batter out the brains of the artillerymen, so wrathful are they for their lost and wounded comrades, and lay hold of two cannon with a mad scream of satisfaction. The capture of about sixty prisoners of a Würtemberg regiment

is effected on and near the spot, and, truth to say, the prisoners betray less mortification at their fate than did their allies of Saxony. The French sappers and pioneers demolish the barricades, and shovel aside the débris from the high road, and the infantry pour into the constructions which had served as guard-houses to the enemy, while others, resolute and joyous, mount the slope of the railway-cutting, and others still assist the engineer officers that accompany the column to fortify the ground they hold against offensive returns. The French are masters of the position, and the raw troops who had wavered for a moment begin to think that a battle, after all, is not such a terrible thing, and that, decidedly, the forces of King William are *not* invincible.

While success is crowning the efforts of the sallying force on those points, to the left of the position and away to the extreme right, somewhat out of range of the general action, their comrades are being hard pressed. It will be well to endeavour to explain the latter operation first. General Susbille's division was at Créteil waiting

for orders, when an estafette from Trochu galloped up at ten, with instructions that the height of Montmesly, commanding the German position at Bonneuil, was to be occupied so as to create a diversion while Ducrot's army was pushing on, where it was hoped the thin end of the wedge would be driven into the investing lines. On went the first brigade—the 115th and 116th of the Line—towards Montmesly, the General Ladreit de la Charrière leading on horseback. As the dark line of little men in blue and red scrambled upwards, the ominous grewsome racket of the mitrailleuse was heard in front, and down in hailstone shower came the stridulous balls. The line was shuffled and shook like a man in full swing of motion stunned by an unexpected blow, and for a few instants it was the turn of a card whether the French would persevere or face about. Here it was that the value of a good officer was proved. la Charrière, intuitively guessing the thoughts of his men, stood in his saddle, held his sword on high, and, with a cry of "*En avant !*" put his horse to the slope of the hill. His men plucked up heart

at the pattern he set, and followed, maintaining a running fire. La Charrière, still in advance, gained the plateau, when a splinter struck him in the right hand, carried away two of his fingers, and sent his blade shivering over the sward. With his left hand he lifted his *képi* and waved it overhead, still keeping on with stern endurance, though his sufferings must have been atrocious. But his passion is not ended. A ball traverses the calf of one of his legs, another penetrates a thigh; nature can hold out no longer—the General swoons and tumbles from his horse. He is lifted on the shoulders of a few faithful soldiers, but does not recover his senses for a full hour and a quarter, to learn from the surgeon that his wounds are mortal. But he had one consolation—that which Wolfe had at Quebec —“the enemy were in retreat;” his brigade had taken Montmesly heights by noon, and hindered the Germans at Chennevières from going to the aid of their companions higher up. To finish with the bye-battle in this quarter of the field, it may be added that Susbille's division had to retire later in the day from the ground



it had won, as the enemy brought up overpowering reinforcements, fearing that there was the threatened spot in their armour. But, in any case, the French had the satisfaction to know that the diversion they created was efficacious.

The critical point of the battle, that where the tug of war was most desperate and bloody, was outside Brie, on the left of Ducrot's front. A division which had been thrown over the Marne, nearly opposite Nogent, where the river bulges out, had marched to the scrubby range of hill on that side, so as to take the enemy in flank. The column of attack was headed by the 125th Regiment and the Zouaves. They came on blithely, and those cool, calculating Germans let them approach to within range of their guns, hidden by the walls of the park of Villiers. When the devoted fellows had got fairly within the jaws of death, a sheet of flame burst out before their eyes, and the earth quaked under the thunderous peal of artillery. A shower of hurtling missiles rent the air overhead. Again and again was the diabolic salute repeated. The leading ranks fall as if swept down by a scythe ;

their comrades swerve, run to the shelter of the vineyards near, where they throw themselves flat on the ground, while the shells split into fragments high up, or sweep through the branches of the trees, or tear the earth into furrows, scattering the clay in all directions. Flesh and blood could not stand it. The worst, that which chokes the Zouaves and Linesmen with rage, is that the enemy is invisible. The only means of overcoming a resistance like this is by artillery. Like to like. It would be lunacy—cruelty—to ask human nature to go bare-breasted against such a storm of lead. Courage can do much, but it cannot face hard metal hurled from the muzzles of modern cannon. The two regiments could do nothing situated as they were; they might be turned by the enemy's cavalry; there is no alternative but to retrace their steps; the order is given to sound the "retire." The movement is executed without flurry, but not without gaps in the ranks of the French. The commandant of the 2nd battalion of the 125th is killed, and many brave officers drop at the head of their companies. The Germans, seeing their ad-

vantage, are not slow to pursue it, and at eleven o'clock they are in possession of Brie, which they had quitted in the early morning to escape the bombardment of the forts, and the French left falls back on the railway to join hands with the more fortunate right. But the triumph of the Germans was short-lived. The French on this occasion showed quite as much vivacity as they. Old Duerot, who had sworn never to return to Paris but as victor, told his men that they must go ahead, and that he would show them how. About one o'clock a division of d'Exéa's corps having entered into line, the word was given to march forward again. In the leading column were several battalions of Provincial Mobiles, fine, sturdy youths, but not too reliable, as most of them were never under fire before. They stepped out gaily enough towards the crest of the heights between Villiers and Brie, but the enemy was prepared, and absolutely riddled them with the rapid discharges from his mitrailleuses. The first rank fell, the second turned pale and shuddered at the sight of mutilated comrades. For a moment it looked as if a panic were about to

set in, and all the morning's advantages to be lost. But again the officers, by their stern, unbending intrepidity, saved the day. Death was in the ascendant; friends were falling every other minute; but still they urged their command to think of France and home, and act like men. A little, thin, bronzed veteran, who had been riding in the press of danger, got in front of some companies of the Seine Inférieure which were faltering, exhorted them to confidence, and was leading them to the onset, stimulating them by word and example, when his left foot was crushed by a splinter of shrapnel, and he had to be taken down from his horse. It was the *forty-fifth* wound he had received in his career of nigh half a century. The little, thin, bronzed veteran was no other than the fighting General Renault—"Renault of the Rear-Guard." As soon as word that he is wounded runs through the ranks, his soldiers, with whom he was popular, as all brave officers are, swore vengeance. Closing up their ranks, the men again advanced, but quick and merciless rolled out, volley on volley, that terrible fire. The Marquis de Bellange, of one of the bat-

talions of the Loiret, had his horse killed under him; the chief of the 4th battalion was struck dead; other superior officers fell on every side, and the infantry were ordered temporarily to evacuate the plateau on which they had ventured too soon. The guns were got up and turned into position, and then was started such an artillery duel as appalled men have rarely witnessed. For nigh two hours the air was filled with the most awful of symphonies; flashing missiles shrieked and tore on their fatal messages; the thud of the howitzers punctuated the roar of crashing bolts; gushes of smoke curled cloudwards, like incense swung to the feet of the war-gods; and all this time the bright December sun shone tranquilly down from a clear, cold sky of blue, flecked with feathery vapour. From the position I occupied, the area of conflict could now be taken in completely. The sight would be magnificent as mere spectacle if one could forget at each quick-recurring throb that those reports were the knell of fellow-men—that each lurid spark that flickered and died in the pure sunshine was typical of the light of young lives gone out for ever, and the lamp

of fond hope quenched in castles and cottage-homes of France and Germany. As many as two hundred and fifty shots were exchanged every minute during this infernal concert. "The blast of War's great organ shakes the skies" in full diapason until the sun is far on its downward course, and it is past three by the watch. By degrees the replies from the German batteries visibly and audibly weaken; the superiority of the French gunners is incontestable. The heights are abandoned, and the infantry, forming by regiments, advance to the attack anew.

"Use your bayonets, men!" is the word.

But the stubborn Germans are there awaiting them; they had but changed their positions. The shock was frightful. Private soldiers fought like generals, and generals like private soldiers. Trochu was in the thick of the fray cheering on his fellow-Bretons, and had an aide-de-camp killed by his side. To those who remonstrated with him because of the risk, he answered:

"Who can prevent me fighting at the head of my children?"

Ducrot had his horse shot under him, and broke his sword on the breast of a Saxon. One of Franchetti's scouts was the hero of a feat that brings back stories of Shaw, the Lifeguardsman; to his own share he killed five Germans, one down, another on. Many noble officers of the Burgundian battalions bit the dust: the Count de Gontaut-Biron fell grievously, the Marquis de Trecesson mortally, wounded. Ten times the tide of battle flowed and ebbed; there was fighting at close quarters and bouts of the Homeric wrestling of old—not the modern cold-blooded, mathematical business, but ding-dong, give-and-take tussling; men laid about them with their musket-butts as if they were quarter-staves; but, as generally happens in such life-and-death encounters, the assailant had the upper hand, and the French were fairly in possession of the plateau at about four o'clock. Still the Germans were not beaten. The supreme effort was yet to be tried. Their cavalry were drawn up behind, and as the infantry fell back two strong squadrons were put in motion, and the clatter of hoofs rang out on the soil, hardened by the frost.

Steadily as machinery at first, then breaking evenly, as if by one impulse, into a smarter pace, they bore down on the French right, outside Champagne. As those splendid cavaliers came on, a phalanx of symmetry and power, the peasant-boys, who were weary and hot with the arduous task of beating back the footmen, were puzzled, perhaps a little disquieted.

“Prepare to receive cavalry!”

Quick with you into hollow squares, front ranks kneeling with bayonets to the horses’ breasts, and musket-butts resting well on the firm earth!

Nothing of the kind. Those days are gone. The French deployment is unaltered, and still nearer press the mass of cavaliers. On they come, fast and faster, till at last they settle in for the charge at some hundred yards. The French infantry dip, and over their prostrate forms swishes a death-blast that no horse or man that ever yet was born could meet and live. With a continuous castanet-like rattle the mitrailleuses belched forth their horrid music, and in a few minutes the ground is strewn with corpses and carcasses, smashed helmets peep-



ing from under saddle-girths, sword-blades viscous with the blood of those who brandished them a little while ago; and horses with foaming nostrils scamper wildly about the plain, their bowels trailing between their hind-legs.

By this hour the main body of the army that crossed the Marne held the plateau between Champigny and Brie, and the German infantry had retired behind Villiers, enshrouding itself in natural hiding-places, such as growths of underwood and breaks in the soil, as well as the refuges that the besiegers had been careful to make with the spade. As there was a series of trenches to be confronted, and night was close, the French infantry halted, and the field-guns, which had now taken place beside the mitrailleuses, gave the enemy some farewell shots. In about half an hour both sides, as if by tacit consent, ceased firing, after an engagement which had commenced before dawn, and a splendid full moon rose on the unhallowed scene. The French had not won much ground, it is true, but they had won some, and slept upon it and for the first time since the opening of the war

the Germans left their wounded and dead behind them on the field.

The day was done ; the first act in the drama had passed off satisfactorily, on the whole, for the French ; and the Governor was enabled to send a cheering despatch to Paris from the fort of Rosny at eight o'clock. But the trials of the soldiers were not over : the night set in intensely cold ; the men were weary with long fighting and wakeful watches, but they had nowhere to lay their heads except on the naked ground they had conquered ; had no covering except their greatcoats—not even a blanket. They set their guards, told off fatigue-parties to light the fires to cook the *popote*, while the regimental butchers set to chopping up the dead horses of the artillery and the enemy's cavalry for a meal of roast-meat. It was some satisfaction, at all events, that they could fix their teeth in a sirloin from a German animal. Not even when whisper was passed that such and such a comrade would answer to the roll-call no more did his gaiety desert the French soldier. A Breton found a tin whistle, and fingered it to one of those quaint

Celtic airs, half-plaintive, half-maddening mirthful, when a circle gathered round the musician, and joined hands for a dance. A poet would call it a war-dance, but it partook more of the character of a hygienic hop to make the blood circulate. The glass was below freezing-point, the temperature dry and harsh with a nipping blast. How agonizing it must have been for the wounded! And some of them had to be left all night where they dropped from the ranks! Yet the staff of the ambulances had been hovering near all day in strength; Mgr. Bauer, chaplain-in-chief (the same who preached the wedding sermon of the Mediterranean and Red Seas at Suez the year before), was on the ground in person; but those things *will* occur in spite of every precaution, as if there were some fatality in it. Hospitals for the more severely wounded had been improvised at Champigny and Brie, but Joinville-le-Pont was the headquarters. The pleasant little station where visitors to the Vincennes steeplechases used to step out of the train was one caravanserai of the victims of war. The streets were encumbered with the

sufferers, some immobile on trusses of straw, others borne by, wan, faint, with glazed eyes and teeth chattering with the cold, often sighing when an unavoidable roughness jolted their limbs. It was heart-breaking to hear the moans forced from them by a ruder shake than ordinary. But too many of them looked like Arthur—as if they feared “their wounds had taken cold and they should die.” The small steamers which ply on the Seine were utilised to convey the men, whose state permitted conveyance, back to Paris. They were moored in line on the Marne, with the well-known white flag with the red cross at the fore, and performed many journeys to and fro, depositing their ghastly burdens on the quay near the Hôtel de Ville, whence they were carried to the Hôtel Dieu opposite, or to the Grand Hôtel in ’buses transformed into ambulance-waggon. The mosquito fleet never did more leal or worthy service. While speaking of the good offices rendered, I must not omit to give tribute of praise to a quiet devoted band that stood in sedate grouping modestly apart with a venerable grey-haired man in semi-ecclesi-

astical costume at their head. That was the Frère Philippe, Superior of the Order of Christian Brothers in France, and those were two hundred of the confraternity who had volunteered to search for the wounded on the field. And well they acquitted themselves of their task, exposing their lives with a fortitude that drew down the surprise and admiration of veterans.

The night was one of fearful suffering for young soldiers, and, indeed, for the most seasoned campaigners. It froze hard, and the stars shone on the inhospitable battle-field with a cruel steely glitter that gave no hope of change to milder weather. While the fight is going on the blood is hot, but this shivering and crouching, with blue trembling lips and benumbed fingers, it is which searches out the vitals. The troops at the front had neither adequate cover nor watch-fires, and in the majority of instances had not even the shelter of a wall against the icy piercing atmosphere. If those who were strong and sound had to call all their fortitude to their aid to enable them to bear up against the temperature,

what must it not have been with the poor wounded wretches who were lying in lone corners, helpless and unhelped, parched with the fever-thirst, and paralyzed in the extremities? They must have prayed for death as a relief—that is those of them who had not sunk into merciful insensibility, or gone off into hardly less merciful delirium. The Mobiles stood the awful test to their endurance staunchly. They lay down in squads, some back to back, and their comrades stretched across them in turn so as to cover their breasts and feet. Every hour their officers woke them up and compelled them to run for fifteen minutes. Trials like these are not unusual among the features of “glorious war.” The battalion of the Moselle marched without shoes, and the victorious legions of the First Empire did not ordinarily repose on beds of rose-leaves.

While the work of death and destruction was being carried on a few miles away, how did the lovely capital of pleasure, the luxurious, incomparable, supremely civilized Paris, metropolis of urbanity and culture, home of art and music and

eloquence—while the demoniac work was being carried on in her name, how did she comport herself? With a dignity and a reserve that redound to her credit, I hold, let whoso dares to lie say to the contrary. She was superb. If she was seething with excitement, the excitement was under control, and was brightened with patriotic hope. At night men might be met moving about with candle-ends, which they lit as soon as a white Government placard, which had the slightest appearance of having been freshly put up, was noticed on the walls. The space before the Mairie, in the Rue Drouot, was blocked with a crowd waiting for the official despatches. Such as arrived were read aloud amid enthusiastic interruptions of "*Vive la France!*" A workman who could not read was in constant requisition. He had the lungs of a Stentor, and trumpeted the news as dictated to him by a friend who could read. Paris was not evil-hearted then. She was calm, with a serene exalted confidence.

## CHAPTER II.

German Demonstration on the West—Position and Forces of the French—Desperate Fight at Epinay—After the Battle—An Armistice of Necessity—Military Caricaturists -- A Grim Maiden's Prayer—The Saxon Soldier's Diary—A Mother's Gifts—Offensive Return on December 2--Obstinate Fighting—Withdrawal of the Germans—Defects of French Organization—Great Loss of Officers—A Devoted Chaplain—Hair-breadth Escapes—A Brave Artillery-Driver—Instances of French Heroism—The Butcher's Bill—The Requiem for the Brave.

BEFORE dismissing the events of the 30th November, it will be well to take a short note of what is passing elsewhere on the extended front of action, embracing almost the entire perimeter of the forts. Of course, a sharp watch had to be kept to the west that the enemy did not try an offensive movement there, while his lines were being attacked by the mass of the garrison on the east. Such a move-



ment was highly probable, and, in fact, had been signalled on the night of the 29th. At ten p.m. General Schmitz received a despatch at the Louvre informing him that the enemy was crossing the bridge of Bezons in force, and threatened the plain of Gennevilliers and Courbevoie. General Le Flô, Minister of War, immediately proceeded to the bridge of Neuilly to superintend the preparations to give the Prussians a warm welcome ; but another despatch crossed him *en route* to the effect that the movement had been discontinued. When the Governor heard of the alarm he sent word from Vincennes that he was well pleased ; it was time the enemy should think of leading off his attack ; Mont Valérien with the battery of St. Ouen and certain pieces of the enceinte would be ready for him. The enemy knew better ; he is brave, but not temerarious. The western side was tranquil while the Great Sortie progressed, and it was only in the north, close by St. Denis, that there was rivalry with the battle-smoke of Villiers.

That the reader may the better take in the ensemble of operations, I here interrupt the nar-

rative to insert a paragraph descriptive of the positions and forces of the troops round Paris. The First Army—that is to say, the two hundred and sixty-six battalions of the National Guard, with their artillery and cavalry legions—may be left aside for various reasons. Not more than a couple of thousand of this force, at most, were under fire at any moment. The entire Second Army lay on the night of the 30th on the plateau between Brie and Champigny, the 1st and 2nd corps (of three divisions each), commanded respectively by Generals Blanchard and Renault, occupying the centre and right, while the 3rd corps (d'Exéa's) was *à cheval* on the Marne opposite Nogent, the 1st division (Bellemare's) holding Brie, and the 2nd (Mattat's) in reserve, on the rising-ground forming the watershed at the other side. In all there was something over 100,000 men in the elbow of the Marne—that is to say, seven divisions of some fifteen thousand men each; the division of Mattat and the cavalry would, perhaps, bring the entire strength of the army to 125,000 men in round numbers. The Third Army (Vinoy's), which originally consisted of seven divi-

sions of infantry and one of cavalry (about 110,000 rank and file), but had been lessened, the troops at St. Denis being constituted into a separate *corps d'armée* under command of Vice-Admiral de la Roncière, was thus distributed:—the division of General d'Hugues was in support of the artillery at Avron to the left of the French front and consequently the north of d'Exéa's corps; to the north of that again, in Drancy, Groslay, and on the plain of Aubervilliers, which they had occupied on the forenoon of the 30th, were the 1st and 3rd brigades of de la Roncière's division, and the cavalry division of the Third Army. The 2nd brigade of the same division was away to the left beyond St. Denis at Epinay, which it had carried after a brilliant little combat, of which I shall have occasion to speak by-and-by. Remain five divisions to account for: the 3rd, under General de Liniers, held the peninsula of Gennevilliers on the north-west; the 4th, under de Beaufort, was lower down on the same side towards Mont Valérien, and the three remaining divisions (1st, 5th, and 7th) camped to the south and south-east under orders of General

Vinoy, so as to be ready to harass the enemy from Choisy to Châtillon.

Now that the ground is clear, let us go back to that eventful 30th, and take a glance at what was done by de la Roncière, so as to be able to bring the day's doings into one comprehensive whole. I am thus elaborate because there are some military lessons to be gleaned from these operations, and because this sortie decided the fate of Paris. There was no blinking it; the improvised army of Trochu could not itself break the circle of investment. The occupation of Drancy and the line of country between the canal of the Ourcq and the railway to Soissons seems to have been effected without much resistance, and large columns of the enemy were drawn from Gonesse to the Pont Iblon to the rear of Bourget, between Dugny and Blanc Mesnil, where the highway to Lille crosses the streamlet called the Morée. About two o'clock, when the action at Villiers was at a white heat, a heavy fire was directed on the village of Epinay on the right bank of the Seine to the left of St. Denis, from the forts of the Double-Couronne and the Briche, the

batteries in the redoubt of Gennevilliers, and a floating battery armed with two heavy pieces of ordnance moored in the river. Epinay was held by a strong body of Prussians (the Royal Guard apparently), who had sheltered themselves by entrenchments, and was protected by the batteries at Orgemont and Montmorency. At two o'clock an attack with the bayonet was made on the village by the brigade of General Henrion sallying from the high-road from St. Denis. The barricades at the entrance had suffered severely from the shelling, and the streets were black with the charred corpses of the men who had been struck during the bombardment; but the Prussians stood up to their fight stubbornly. The struggle was fierce for about half an hour, and many who had sought refuge in the cellars of the houses had hand-to-hand conflicts with their assailants. In the end the French carried the position, but at what a loss! Nigh a dozen of those plucky little devils, the French officers, were put *hors de combat*, and a couple of hundred of their followers. This was the most radiant episode of the day's teeming chapter, and the victors had the satisfaction

of sending back seventy-two prisoners and two mitrailleuses.

The picture of a battle-field, on the morrow of strife, has been painted so often and so graphically by more vivid pens than mine that I shrink from the attempt. Besides, it might disgust tea-table quidnuncs with the pomps of war. The Prussians have a special corps of gravediggers, who follow their army to bury its dead; the French had not yet reached to that pitch of civilization. They detail squads of their soldiers to trench their fallen comrades. The soldiers do not like the duty; *la corvée noire*, the "black fatigue-party," they call it. And yet the duty is not heavy: two privates dig a shallow hole beside the corpse, a corporal searches in the pockets for money and papers, and then it is shot into the pit of fresh earth, with clothes and shoes on it (unless the shoes are very good), and the shovels are plied anew and the clay trampled down on the head of the obscure mother's son. It is not more complicated than that. Let us hurry by. There was some shooting by the advance-guards on both sides on the 1st of December to keep their blood

warm, and the artillery on the plateau of Avron directed its fire on the reinforcements the enemy was bringing up; but as a rule the combatants were fatigued, and stood in their respective corners recovering breath for the next round. At one o'clock M. Serurier, Vice-President of the Geneva Society, advanced alone to the German outposts a few yards from Villiers and negotiated a suspension of arms till nightfall to complete the work of burial. The villages, which had been occupied by the enemy, were the object of much curiosity on the part of their new tenants. A forcible idea they gave of the amenities of warfare—houses ravaged, roofs destroyed, walls broken into a fretwork of embrasures; here and there angular fragments of shell as they had burst, sometimes sticky pools of mud and blood beside them, or great oval craters sunk into the soil where they had landed. It was not nice. The field was trodden as bare in parts as the turf of Epsom after the Derby-day; *képis* and caps were strewn over it plentiful as mushrooms on a sheep-walk; in spots broken guns and torn pouches were visible, as if a party of burglars who

had sacked an armourer's shop had been overtaken by the police there and had flung away the "swag;" where the mitrailleuses had been stationed the ground was sown with cartouche-boxes. There was just one feature of liveliness in this charnel framing—farce beside tragedy—the caricatures at the expense of the French with which the Germans had amused their leisure. There was an elephantine humour in them, but none of them were so coarse as those exhibited on Paris boulevards by the most spirituel nation in the world. We had portraits of Trochu and of the lean Rochefort and of "*Napoleon der Slave*" (which French penny-a-liners, with their usual intimate acquaintance with foreign languages, translated "*Napoleon the last*"!); Dumanet had the pleasure of seeing himself as others see him in a gaunt figure of an unarmed soldier with manacled wrists. All is fair in love and war; Dumanet took up his bit of charcoal to have his hit at the Tudesque warrior, *der Teufel!* with his porcelain-bowled pipe, his specs on nose, and his hands full of sausages. An anxious search was made for German newspapers that might give



information as to the world without, and the pockets of many a poor Suabian youth were rifled of letters from the dear ones at home. All of those letters breathe a tender affection ; some are written with an eloquence, because a fidelity to true sentiment, that no novelist has ever reached, and bring tears down like rain to read them, while others call up an unavoidable smile from their quaint naïveté. There was one from some loving Gabrielle (I could swear her eyes were soft and blue) to her brother, Bernard Læcke, enclosing him musk to guarantee him against the camp-sickness.

“ Make haste and bombard Paris, and have done with it,” adds Gabrielle.

What a wicked, thoughtless little heart it is ! And yet, I venture to say, Gabrielle would turn from blood with loathing, or fly in pretty terror from the sight of a mouse. Here is the copy of some lines found on a page of a letter from his cousin on a Saxon soldier named Birmann, of the 106th Regiment :

## ORDER OF THE DAY OF OUR TROOPS BEFORE PARIS.

- 4 a.m. Salute from the Parisian shells.
- 5 „ Milkless coffee, guiltless of strength.
- 6 „ Godsend of a wrack-mattress. Contents gratefully received and appropriated to the manufacture of tobacco.
- 7-8 „ Hunger.
- 9 „ Rooting for potatoes.
- 10 „ Potato-hunt fruitless.
- 11 „ Hunger again.
- Midday. Dinner consisting of delicious grapes, potatoes and crust of bread. Mess-band supplied by cannonade from Paris. Exquisite red wine.
- 1 p.m. Outpost duty.
- 2 „ Balloon-hunting.
- 3 „ Hunt of a carrier-pigeon.  
Pigeon, if thou be'st carrier thy chance is not big,  
But, caught, in any case thou'lt hop the twig.
- 4 „ We catch two sparrows and a cat that was watching them.
- 5 „ Drying walnut-leaves for our next pipeful.
- 6 „ Vesper hymn by the cannon of all the forts.
- 7 „ Hunger. Supper. Hunger over again.
- 8 „ Illumination by the electric sun from the forts.
- 9 „ Sleep. Hunger. Shells all round. Hunger, and hunger again.

Poor Birmann! On the other page, that on which his cousin sent his love from far Hotteritz, there are touches of nature that might well make thee kin with thy brother from Finisterre, for whom

some long-haired mother weeps and prays by the shrine of St. Catherine, patroness of Brittany :

“ I send three thalers and some linen for thy feet ; the socks are not yet knitted. . . . We regret that thou hast to go on campaign in the first year of thy service ; but this is not the way for a German to speak ; console thyself, my lad, like the others. . . . Thy mother sends thee a thousand kisses, and we trust from the bottom of our hearts that thou wilt return safe, with God's help !”

Home, patriotism, piety—all are there in that letter to the Saxon soldier ; and they are honoured sentiments among the humble rustics under this flag, too : yet the deadly feud goes on, and Bavarian shoots Burgundian, and Breton hews down stout Saxon ; and all reverence God, and wish in their inmost hearts that the tribulation were over. Meanwhile, tidings reach us that new siege-guns are being hurried down from Cologne, and the hat is sent round for contributions to buy new guns to oppose them at Paris, and—Christmas is coming !

The Truce of God of old in France, in the times of the Carlovingian kings, used to last for four

clear days. That, enforced by death, on the battlefield of Villiers was of shorter duration. The world is hardly improving as it grows older. Long before sunrise on the morning of the 2nd, the outposts of the three *corps d'armée* on the bleak stretch from Brie to Champigny were attacked by compact masses of the Germans, pouring down from Cœuilly and the wood of St. Martin. The advanced sentinels, who could hardly handle their rifles, so cold it was, had nothing for it but to fall back on their supports, and these, in turn, slowly receding, were tightly put to it to hold their own till the half-frozen and fatigued men, trying to catch forty winks in the bivouacs, were roused to the emergency. The conflict, made more terrible by the struggling mist that hid the combatants from one another, was altogether in favour of the Germans. They came silently and steadily, as if on parade, to within a few hundred yards of the barricade outside Brie, when the front ranks knelt, placed their pouches beside them on the ground, and methodically began loading and firing. The French, recovered from their confusion, met them with a

ringing volley from the chassepots. As men fell from the leading files others stepped into their places, and the exchange of bullets went on vigorously as before. Over the same ground on which the action was engaged on the 30th the fighting was general, and for the first three hours the Germans had the best of it; the French suffered severely, and were put on their mettle to keep the enemy at bay. A powerful artillery was brought into play on both sides, and the hell-vapour that has grown so familiar swirled upwards in the chilly morning air. At eight the German advance was definitely stopped, and the French reserves coming up, an unshaken front was opposed to the columns of assault. Orders were sent to Paris to muster the available war-battalions of the National Guard in support, and General Thomas marched out to St. Maur at the head of about 15,000 of the civic force. It was even feared that the infantry divisions on the western side would have to be brought into line, and Generals de Beaufort and de Liniers were ordered to hold them in readiness. The French superior officers behaved with great intrepidity

while the combat was in the balance, and to them is due the credit of having turned the scale of fortune. From eleven o'clock the issue was no longer doubtful; the daring effort of the Germans to regain their lost positions failed, and slowly, inch by inch, they stepped back under the "dice of death" that were cast down upon them from front and flank.

General Vinoy lent some troops to his comrade Ducrot, and operated a diversion to the south, which helped to disengage his right, and at about a quarter to two the entire German line bent like a bow, and gradually recoiled to the cover of the woods, its artillery keeping up a tremendous fire to cover the retrograde movement. Once under shelter of the trees and entrenchments, the French durst not pursue them, but remained on the identical terrain they had slept on the night before. Their mastery was undisputed from four, when there was a cessation of the fearful cannonade on both sides. In any case, little more could be done, as twilight was fast approaching.

Thus, for the second time, the plateau of

Villiers was won, but it was easy to perceive that the position before it was now too firmly kept to be carried by the sallying forces, weakened and wearied with their three days' almost continued battling, jaded by sleeplessness, and benumbed by the Siberian cold. Besides, the enemy must evidently have received formidable reinforcements in the interval since the previous Wednesday, and—the precious Intendance again—the French provisions and munitions were well-nigh exhausted. In one of the despatches transmitted, General Trochu admits that there was but a “*matériel incomplet*” to meet the attack. The butcher's bill (what an odious phrase it is!) for the three days' fighting is necessarily long, and unfortunately includes a large proportion of officers. Military men know what that means. Colonel Dréval, one of the Governor's aides-de-camp, received a ball through the arm, and M. Maurice Ellysen, chief organizer of the International Ambulance, who was also close by General Trochu, had a horse shot under him, and was wounded in the head by a flying morsel of shrapnel. General Paturel, commandant of the

2nd brigade of de Malroy's division of Blanchard's corps, was wounded, and had a peer in misfortune in General Boissonet, commanding the artillery of Renault's corps. Amongst the colonels placed *hors de combat* were Villiers of the artillery, Vigneral of the Mobiles of Ile et Vilaine, the Viscount de Grancey of the Côte d'Or, and Alexis de Podio of the 23rd Régiment de Marche ; the latter two were killed on the spot. Colonel de la Monneraye was mortally wounded. M. de Sazilly, who manœuvred a battery of mitrailleuses attached to Ducrot's command, was hit and died a few hours after admission to hospital. Lieutenant Sorlin, of the Mobiles of the Côte d'Or, was caught by a bullet in the forehead from a sharpshooter while surveying the enemy's positions with a telescope at Champigny. This brave young man had been conspicuous for his daring at the assault of Bagneux a few weeks before, where he took a barricade at the head of a few of his Burgundian boys. Of the twenty-three officers of the 1st battalion of Zouaves (Commandant Noellat), which was foremost in the rush on the Park of Villiers, and amply redeemed the passing error of Châtillon, but *four*



—the adjutant-major, two captains, and a sub-lieutenant—came scatheless out. When the wreck of the 1st battalion was rallied behind the 2nd, the latter went forward in its turn, and left five officers and nearly a third of its effective on the field. Not a single superior officer of the four battalions of the Mobiles of Ile et Vilaine was left unhurt; happily, not one of them was slain.

In the attack on Brie three young magistrates, MM. de Clery, Sauzède and Potier, all volunteers in the 108th Regiment de Marche, distinguished themselves; the two last named were wounded. It was a coincidence that the 107th and 108th Regiments, which composed Colonel Reille's brigade, were charged at one portion of the day by the 107th and 108th Regiments of German infantry, to wit, the 8th and the Leipzig fusiliers of the Saxon contingent. The French stood up to their fight, and as the Saxons neared them, unmasked a couple of mitrailleuses which pitilessly mowed them down without the slightest chivalric consideration for similarity of number. There was no Fontenoi courtesy going astray that day; the heart of a

mitrailleuse is hard as the nether millstone. Four-and-twenty officers of the 122nd were sent to earth, and the command of the regiment devolved on a junior captain. The chief of battalion Gillant, a man of much promise, and unusually young for his grade (only thirty-one), who had escaped from a German prison after the capitulation of Metz, was cut down. It was his kismet. Franchetti, who had formed and led a dashing squadron of scouts, got his death-warrant while carrying orders from General Ducrot. The ruthless Hoff disappeared—none could tell where or how.

Among the unfortunates on the first day were three of the 202nd battalion of the National Guard, who were knocked over by explosion of the same shell. The simple fellows were standing up in a battery watching the flight of the projectiles, when a bomb burst full in their midst, sweeping both legs clean off one of them. As the limbs lay quivering near, a lancer, in the most commonplace manner, kicked them into a hole and covered them away from sight. On the same day Captain de Goësbriand, of a Breton battalion, was killed. As

the chaplain of the corps, M. de Marhallach, was shriving him in his death-agony his broad-brimmed priest's hat was carried off by a shot, and the skirt of his cassock split by a bullet. A man-of-war captain, Eugène Desprez, who was leading the marine companies, met a soldier's fate on the same occasion. A touching anecdote is told of this true gentleman. During a cruise in the Indian Ocean, while he was yet a ship's lieutenant, the cry was raised of "A man overboard!" but as a stiff breeze was blowing, and the man was only an A.B., the commandant hesitated to tack to send a boat to save him. Desprez boiled over with indignation. "You can't hesitate when an officer's life is at stake," said he to his superior, jumping into the waves to the rescue of the drowning seaman. Captain de Néverlée was picked off at the head of a company of Freeshooters, as he was leading it to the attack of the Park of Villiers. This was a calamity, for he was a daring soldier, and had already been cited in orders. Although chieftain of a band of irregulars when he perished, he held a commission in the regular cavalry, and was present

with the First Corps (MacMahon's) of the so-called Army of the Rhine in the actions at the opening of hostilities. He had succeeded in infusing his own gay-devil spirit into his followers, who were all good men and true. Three officers in one battery of artillery, the 17th of the 11th Regiment, sacrificed themselves while sustaining the advance of the infantry. These were Captain Trémoulet, Lieutenant Chevalier, and Sub-Lieutenant Mathis. Lieutenant Perseval of the Engineers was wounded on the 2nd, but declined to report himself unfit for duty. On the next day, before the recrossing of the Marne had been decided upon, he was loop-holing the steeple of the village church at Champigny, when a merciless shot cut short his career. Prévault, Lieutenant-Colonel of the 42nd, who had only got his promotion a few days before, was killed in the van of his command in the first day's fighting, and Girouin, Adjutant-Major of the same regiment, met a similar fate on the 2nd by one of those extraordinary hazards which almost tempt to disbelief in Providence. He defended a garden for seven hours, and when obliged to beat a retreat, he

made the soldiers retire by a breach in the wall, remaining to the last himself. As he was preparing to step out to rejoin them, he dropped, mortally wounded. Proal, Adjutant-Major of the 55th, got his death-stroke on the 30th of November, while leading his battalion to the charge. Captain Parisot, of the 107th, was shot at point-blank range as he hurried his company to the support of a compromised point on his left, but not till he had the satisfaction of bringing down two of his assailants with his revolver. Chief of battalion Mowat, called Bedford, of the 114th, a gentleman with English blood in his veins, behaved brilliantly on the 30th up to the moment the fore-ordained bullet came—bullet to which he succumbed on the day after. I took a personal interest in poor Mowat. He had been Adjutant-Major of the 4th battalion of Foot Chasseurs, and I had been looking for him for weeks to present a letter of introduction, but could not ascertain into what regiment he had been drafted. Alas! that letter was never to reach the brave gentleman. By a singular unity of ill-luck, Messieurs de la Monneraye, Dupuy de Podio and

Sanguinetti, lieutenant-colonels respectively of the 122nd, 123rd, and 124th Regiments of the Line, were all three "in one red burial blent," as they cheered their men to an onset. Three fated officers of the 4th Zouaves distinguished themselves. Captain de Podenas had a horse shot under him, and was mortally wounded as his company hurled back the enemy; Lieutenant Primat, who had returned from Metz with a wound, met his death under Paris before the lips of his wound were well brought together; and Lieutenant Leroux persisted in remaining in a perfect slaughter-trap, and would not flinch to save his life. These were genuine Zouaves, merry in bivouac and forward in fight, joyous children of the rakish fez.

The dead were not the most to be pitied. There was Sub-Lieutenant Baron de Cambray, of the Mobiles of the Loiret, a beaming cherry-cheeked stripling. He lost an arm and a leg by contact with damnable splinters of shell. At the pallet of that mangled boy, how would the Minister who entered on this war with a light heart—the thoughtless phrasemonger—have felt? Not com-

fortable, I ween. Some, who certainly did not spare themselves, had a miraculous immunity from seath. Brigadier-General de la Mariouse was everywhere that death was busiest, and sped, as if he had the gift of invulnerability. Captain Viel of the artillery was not so fortunate. He was seriously injured. To a visitor to his bedside who eulogized his bravery, he answered philosophically, "My good sir, there is no courage in getting wounded;" but he modestly neglected to add that his agonies did not prevent him from remaining under fire and stimulating the unwounded by his energy and fortitude. Thurel, a driver in the 5th battery of the 21st Regiment of Artillery, gave a pattern of what a good soldier should be. Although badly hurt, he brought back his piece with a single horse, the others having been disabled. To properly estimate the presence of mind of the man, that picture must be filled in. First, there must have been a hail of projectiles to knock over three horses of the four. Thurel's escape must have been by the breadth of a finger-nail. The horse beside that on which he rode was staggered, and he him-

self wounded by explosion of the same shell. He looked round. His companion-driver had disappeared. What was to be done? They must retire. There was no standing that fire. But the gun—was it to be left to the enemy? Quick as thought driver Thurel alighted, disengaged the horse that remained from the prostrate carcase beside it, yoked his solitary beast to the gun-carriage, and slowly dragged it out of action. Sapper Kleine, a volunteer, was ever ready to seek the mid-tumult of the fray. He was a devoted citizen before he took up soldiering for country—had been a deputy-chief in the office of the Ministry of Public Instruction, where his services had earned the decoration of Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. When the Germans arrived before Paris, he joined the improvised army with his son, a boy of seventeen. Private Faure, of the 105th, showed himself a very paladin. At the park of Petit-Brie he brought down three Germans to his chassepot. Rushing forward to seize on their arms, he was confronted by four others. "Surrender!" cried Faure, and the four weak-kneed warriors laid down the weapons they were unfit to carry, and followed



him like sheep. Leonville, of the 107th, had the pleasure, rare in modern battles, of a duel with a foeman. A German officer pinked him with his sword; the Frenchman, smarting from the pain, closed with his antagonist, tore the dripping blade from his grasp, and ran him through from breast to back.

In the forward movement of a field battery a piece was dismounted, a shell having burst on the limber. Brigadier Tourene, of the 11th Artillery, never paused, but ordered up an ammunition-waggon, detached the leading portion of it, to which he rigged the derelict gun and moved it to the position it should occupy. The Abbé de Marhallach (mentioned already), Chaplain of the Mobiles of Finisterre, signalized himself by advancing to the hottest spots in the extreme front of skirmishers, and lavishing his ministrations, as priest and doctor, on the wounded. To watch the grave man going forward as calmly as he might have passed, breviary in hand, from his presbytery down in Brittany to the parish church, it was easy to divine that there was a mystery under that black gown.

There was indeed. Life had no charms for him; he sought the higher life. The Abbé de Marhallach had a wife whom he had loved; she died, an adorable infant with her, leaving him alone in the world. There was the secret of his friendship for death. He and another Breton priest, the Abbé de Kergariou de Locmarla, were named Chevaliers of the Legion of Honour. Dr. Ory, of the 10th battalion of Mobiles of the Seine, dressed the wounded under fire as methodically as if he were in the Hôtel Dieu. The corporal, who was waiting on him with bandages, was stretched dead at his elbow by an unreflecting bullet. Private Arrigli, of the 42nd, stopped seven hours watching the enemy's movements from the top of a wall—a regular cockshot—and was never hit. His comrade, Marchand, was wounded twice, but would not fall to the rear until a third shot smashed the bone of his leg. Heroes of this bull-dog breed were not uncommon. On the other hand, convalescents from the ambulances, who loitered over-long on the boulevards, were numerous. It was no wonder they were in no hurry to rejoin the fighting line.

A veteran who had caught a racking rheumatism was left to shift as he could ; but a conscript, wounded ever so slightly before the enemy, was a spoiled child of the Parisians.

Three of the 135th, forming part of the army-corps of St. Denis, were cited in orders: Captain Ferrier, who had two brother-officers slain by his side at the attack on Epinay, and was the first to burst into the park by a hole giving passage to a single man ; Sergeant Roux, who, with ten comrades, stormed a house occupied by eleven Prussians, and took them prisoners ; and Private Thenays, who bayoneted a sentinel outside a post, and, springing over his corpse, compelled those within to submit. Two of the "Friends of France," de Rozencrans and Musson, got the red ribbon ; and a third, Mullen, the military medal, a decoration not to be despised, since it was conferred on the same date on General Tripier of the Engineers, a veteran of forty-six years' service and twenty-two campaigns, who had been Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour for fourteen years.

On this ensanguined field of Villiers, which was

held by the Germans with such tenacious grip, they were not the only men to dare and suffer. The French, speaking of them as a body, behaved well and some of them achieved exploits that were worthy of their grandsires of the great Napoleonic hosts. If individual heroism could have saved the day, it would have been saved. The leaders were magnificent. Ducrot rode hither and thither, conspicuous on a white horse, as if he raced after Death on a steed from its own stables. But he was uninjured except for a slight contusion on his neck. Trochu was well to the front, serious, but calm and vigilant; at times he surveyed the enemy's lines through a glass, quietly contemptuous of a shower of whistling bolts, and at times, with a sad severity on his face, he positively gave paternal admonitions to frightened young soldiers, and sent them back to the combat recovered from their demoralization.

A nominal list of casualties, such as is customary in the British service, was not given by the French. The victims of the rank and file are cyphers; but the losses could not be dissembled. When officially ascertained, they reached the following grim figures:

	Officers.		Rank and File.	
	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.
2nd Army .....	61	301	711	4,098
3rd Army .....	8	22	192	364
Corps of St. Denis	3	10	33	218
Totals .....	72	333	936	4,680

Grand total of killed, 1,008 ; of wounded, 5,013.

The fight on the 2nd of December was much angrier and more desperate than on the 30th of November, and the German losses must have been in excess of the French, if that were any satisfaction. They were the assailants, therefore the most exposed. A local armistice of forty-eight hours had to be agreed on to permit them to bury their dead. This melancholy duty was performed for the French after this concluding day of the Great Sortie by the Christian Brothers. It was a profoundly impressive sight to watch them in small bands traversing the plateau, become *Aceldama*, piously picking up the corpses and laying them—comrades fallen in one cause—into the narrow house. The officers were interred in a corner apart, the clay was smoothed over the hillocks, and a layer of quicklime shed on

the soil. Rude crosses of wood, painted black, were set up to mark the place of skulls, and then—their task ended—the shovels and pickaxes were laid aside, and the holy men knelt, and the white-haired Frère Philippe, joining his hands, with bent head, murmured the *De Profundis*, the solemn and affecting psalm used as funeral rite in Roman Catholic countries. It was the Christian farewell to the defenders of Paris, for whom no mothers were there to pray.

### CHAPTER III.

Hopeful Attitude of Paris—Scientific Vitality—The Marne Re-crossed—Why the Sortie Failed—Death of la Charrière—Poulizac's Reconnaissance—French Indiscipline—Renault's Last Cry—Message from von Moltke—Burial of Franchetti—Belleville Runaways—German Officers Insulted—Capture of the Prussian Fleet!—Hugo's Resolve—Bread-Panic—The Postman's Knock—Colonel Hickory P. Shooter—Cousin Jonathan in a Pawn-shop—Paddy McDermott's Petition—Rumoured Dissensions among Generals—The Irrepressible Proclamations—National Guard Gossip—Heroic Sea-dogs—Beasts of Burden Requisitioned—Strange Meats—Pallida Mors—Romance and Reality of War.

PARIS behaved remarkably well throughout the whole duration of the conflict on which its destiny hinged. For once in its history, the Bourse—what there was of it—was patriotic. There was a rise in Rente. On the second day the town was hopeful, and a rumour spread that the advanced guard of

the army had got ten miles away. If that were only true, an outlet was secure. The pause in the operations came, but that was attributed to the necessity of clearing the front of the enemy's wounded and burying the dead. As prisoners were brought in, Paris was inclined to a decided optimism. On the 2nd of December this optimism still prevailed, and prayers might be heard on all sides that a sad date in Imperial annals might be effaced by the new page that was being written in French blood. There was general joy, and the long-coveted gaol-delivery was looked forward to with confidence. As there was a message from Gambetta that the Army of the Loire was at Montargis, some seventy-five miles off, there were prophets who averred that, if things went on smoothly, Ducrot might join hands with de Paladines at Brie-Compte-Robert within four days.

While the dogs of war were fixed in each other's throats, M. Jansenn, a savant, was despatched with apparatus in a balloon to take observations of an expected eclipse of the sun in Algeria! Was this a piece of theatrical jactancy on the part of the



Provisional Government, or a solid vindication of the impassiveness of science? These savants are not to be judged by ordinary rules. While cannon-claps were conussing the air, a former colleague, Dr. Montucci, the scientific editor of *Galignani's Messenger*, coolly elaborated a plan for aëronauts to destroy the Government despatches with which they were entrusted, should they descend on the enemy's cruising-grounds. It was simple as "good evening." All the aëronauts had to do was to take with them a phial of azotic acid, and pour it over their papers to render them illegible. The dear old doctor's discovery reminded one of the charlatan's infallible method for killing fleas. As if the aëronauts had not hands and could not tear the papers to rags in the time that it would take to uncork the phial.

Ducrot's army recrossed the Marne under cover of a fog on the morning of the 3rd of December. This could be read but one way, the Great Sortie had failed; but it was not generally known. The Bourse, which was 53f. 4c. on Tuesday, had gone up to 54f. 18c. by this Saturday. There was no

grumble about scarcity of provisions, yet the community was suffering. Measures, however, were adopted to mitigate those sufferings: the wives of National Guards without means, called to activity, were declared entitled to a daily allowance of sevenpence; the city was authorised to raise five millions of francs for war expenses, and a credit on the Budget for half a million of francs for the support of the soup-kitchens was opened on its account.

Inexplicable Paris was sanguine. Was it because of those seven hundred German prisoners, brought to Vincennes, and thence by night to the Roquette? A drop as compared to the deluge of Frenchmen absorbed by Germany. These prisoners were very reserved, and would give no information as to the position or condition of their comrades. Stoical and dutiful sons of the Fatherland.

Still sanguine, and the Great Sortie had ended in disaster irremediable; the last chance had been thrown away; all was over now but the singing of dirges. That sortie had fair prospect of success, always assuming that a provincial army was within a three-days' march; but it was grossly mismanaged.

There were three causes which combined to bring about the failure: the unforeseen delay in the passage of the Marne, the incompetency of the Intendance, and the unexampled severity of the weather. The first was the fatal, the inexpiable blunder. If the crossing were to be made by eight pontoon bridges, and they were too short, how is it six or less could not have been improvised out of them by adaptation of material? Were there no available steamboats on the Seine? Was it impossible to prepare cask rafts at the Bercy wine-dépôt? Vinoy's diversion towards the south-east was attended with unhoped-for fortune: had the real attack been pressed simultaneously, as proposed, the enemy would have been put to straits. Even on the second day, he was hard pressed. But the interval of inactivity on the 1st of December gave him time to bring up reinforcements; and the French—the same men who had borne the brunt already, who were worried and worn out, were half frozen, had no blankets and no reserve of rations—were asked to cope with large masses of fresh and hardy troops. An offensive return was as certain

as anything could be, and yet the French leaders—shame to chronicle it—were taken by surprise.

It was not till the 4th that the dream of success to which Paris had given itself up was dissolved, and its rosy illusion blown, like a soap-bubble, into nothingness. A proclamation from Ducrot appeared, explaining his withdrawal to Vincennes after two “glorious combats.” The explanation explained nothing. Contrary to a very natural apprehension, Paris took it in brave part, and retained its faith in the future.

“Did not the Government warn us that Trochu’s plan comprised false attacks and simulated retreats? This advance was merely to explore the enemy’s position on the Marne and test his strength.”

Thus reasoned this extraordinary populace. Ducrot did not exaggerate when he called these combats glorious: if Germany had the successes in the campaign, few will deny that France had some glory, even in her disasters.

The tale of death was lengthening. The weather was unpropitious for the wounded. This day we learned that General Ladreit de la Charrière had breathed his last, and this day Jules Ferry had to

make an appeal to the public for beds. And Paris was steadily eating its way into its food. Twenty thousand horses had been slaughtered since September ; forty-five thousand remained, exclusive of those required for Government services. The time of aches and sorrows and humiliations was not over ; but it behoves those who had to undergo them not to dwell upon them. Many of us were actuated by Thomas Campbell's philosophy—"To bear is to conquer our fate," and a sound philosophy it is.

On the 5th of December we had good news and bad. There was a spirited reconnaissance by Commandant Poulizac and two hundred of his Eclaireurs as far as Aulnay, in the north-east, on the line of rail to Soissons. Three Prussian posts were surprised, taken at the bayonet's point, and burned, and an unarmed redoubt was destroyed. The enemy left seven of his dead behind him. Commandant Poulizac brought back as booty thirty knapsacks, two needle-guns, and forty spiked helmets. General Noël, in command at Mont Valérien, inveighed against the propensity to marauding and drunkenness of certain of his troops, and was authorised by

the Governor to establish a permanent court-martial at his headquarters. Complaints of this nature were not rare. More damage, I fear, had been done out of pure mischief in the deserted houses in the environs by Frenchmen, mostly Parisian Mobiles and Freeshooters, than by the Germans. Mr. Richard Wallace, heir to the millionaire Marquis of Hertford, gave a donation of 200,000 francs to aid in supplying firing to the necessitous. A pigeon, which left on the 12th October with the balloon "Washington," returned only to-day. He was enlarged in the neighbourhood of Cambray. He must have gone on the grand tour in the interval. Some of the pigeons made the voyage from Tours in an hour and a half. Our doves were not perfumed as those of the ancients were, but how fragrant were their messages from friends beyond that boundary of shell and flame, friends so near and yet so far! Never did Anacreon more ardently welcome the ἐρασμὴ πέλεια winging its jaded homeward flight through upper air. But, alas! it was not often the carriers brought us the tidings for which we yearned.

On December 6th, General Renault died in the Lariboissière hospital, after nigh a week's excruciating torments borne with Spartan courage. His mutilated leg had been cut off in vain. When some bystanders expressed their sympathies after the operation, the poor old man sighed, smiled faintly, and murmured, "The deliverance of Paris is cheap at the price of a limb!" That saying, I submit, is nobler than Henry IV.'s "*Paris vaut bien une messe.*" The dying scene was most affecting. The General was eager in his inquiries as to his troops. "Is Paris revictualled?" he asked. Raising himself on the bed by a supreme effort, and throwing wide his arms, he cried, "*Vive la France!* Death to the Prus——" and fell back lifeless before the phrase was finished. There is one consolation, his last moments were not embittered with the knowledge of the truth. Commandant Franchetti died this evening in the Grand Hôtel. Over five hundred Frenchmen slain on the second day lay still unburied outside Champigny. An ambulance party, which left to perform the last sad office for them, was, unfortunately, fired upon by its own friends

in the redoubt of St. Maur, after a suspension of arms had been agreed to with the enemy. The Germans cried "Treachery !" but it was a palpable mistake—an inexcusable mistake, if one chooses to insist. A Government placard was posted about five o'clock in the evening, which caused a lively sensation, as may well be conceived. Here it is, literally translated :

"The Government of National Defence brings the following facts to the knowledge of the population. Yesterday evening the Governor received a letter, text of which is subjoined:—'Versailles, Dec. 5th, 1870.—It may be useful to inform your Excellency that the Army of the Loire was defeated yesterday near Orleans, and that that city has been re-occupied by the German troops. If, notwithstanding, your Excellency judges proper to convince yourself of the fact by one of your officers, I shall not fail to provide him with a pass to go and return. Accept, General, the expression of the high consideration with which I have the honour to be your very humble and obedient servant,—The Chief of the Staff, COMTE DE MOLTKE.' The Governor has answered :—'Paris, Dec. 6, 1870.—Your Excellency



has thought it useful to inform me that the Army of the Loire has been defeated near Orleans, and that that city is re-occupied by the German troops. I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of this communication, which I do not consider proper to verify by the means your Excellency indicates. Accept, General, etc. (as above)—The Governor of Paris, GENERAL TROCHU.' This news which comes to us from the enemy, supposing it to be exact, does not deprive us of the right of relying on the great movement of France hastening to our aid. It does not alter in one iota our resolves and our duties. They are condensed in a word: 'Fight! Long live France! long live the Republic!' [Follow the signatures of the members and secretaries of the Government and the Ministers.]

The Government evidently mistrusted the good faith of Prussia. Did not the besiegers of Mayence send in a *Moniteur Officiel*, specially counterfeited, to induce the garrison to capitulate? My individual conviction was that a part, at least, of the army of the Loire had been defeated; but Paris rejected the supposition with scorn. On the 7th,

we had a snowfall. The Marquis de Podenas, Captain of Zouaves, and M. Chevalier, one of the Polytechnic students, made artillery officer for the siege, both wounded on the 2nd, died this day. Brave Franchetti was buried. The ceremony was marked by a deep and widespread display of mourning, for the knightly Italian had won much popularity by his prompt and unselfish patriotism since the opening of the siege. O'Donovan and I attended, and piously unbared as the procession slowly wended by on the boulevards. We had the thoughtlessness to converse in English, when a sallow, well-dressed man in the National Guard cap turned on us and delivered a vituperative harangue on the baseness, treachery, and mercenary conduct of England now that France was in a hole, and sought to make us personally accountable for her alleged misdoings. I am not an Englishman, but I would have dearly liked to have had a quarter of an hour's interview with that hero in a room in a Long Acre fighting-house. I think I could have effected some alteration in his mental and other eyesight. He looked what he probably

was—a sedentary warrior, who campaigned by a stove. O'Donovan and I had to bear with this ill-mannered goose-cap in silence; if we had dared to say what we thought, we should have been immolated to the Moloch of patriotic vengeance. I listened to him attentively, bowed to him as if I meant it, and I dare say he set down the ironical equanimity of disdain to my “English phlegm.”

No reader can be more conscious than he who writes this narrative of the dulness into which it lapses now, but that is a necessity of the theme—more, it is a proof that the narrative is veracious, and a faithful reflex of the time. A story is told of an orator who yawned in the middle of one of his own speeches. A friend having commented upon the occurrence afterwards, he remarked: “Ah, true; but was it not a very stupid speech?” To be candid, a prolonged siege is mainly stupid; but if it be wearisome to read of, how much more wearisome must it not have been to have fretted under! This be my excuse.

And now, having liberated my soul, let me get back to my necessarily scrappy diary.

On this 7th, a long report appeared, dissolving the Tirailleurs of Belleville for cowardice. Those were the prating rascals—the scum of atheistical and revolutionary Paris—who demanded to be let out at the Prussians! They ran away from their post at Créteil, and published a defence excusing themselves on the plea of “momentary weakness.” (NOTE.—When a company took leg-bail, its conduct arose from justifiable panic; when an army, from treason, defeated generals having invariably sold themselves to the enemy.) Major Flourens, commander of the ragged regiment of Bobadils, was arrested last night, in the society of his patent-leather jack-boots, outside the fortifications, and committed to a cell in the Conciergerie. The charge against him was assumption of a military rank to which he had no right. The Government called on those persons who appropriated guns left by the enemy on the battle-fields of last week to hand them over to the military authorities, to be utilized for the defence. General Schmitz published a note, deploring grave insults to which four Prussian officers, prisoners on parole, had been subjected on

yesterday evening in a restaurant. Public emotion, he added, might explain, but could not justify such acts.

On the 8th, a cock-and-bull story about the capture of the Prussian fleet in the port of Jahde was published in the *Electeur Libre*: a French admiral had gone in with two frigates, got gloriously blown up by torpedoes, and so forth. Eight war-battalions of the National Guard and three new 14-lb. batteries, presented by subscription to the Government, were inspected on the Place Vendôme. That was better than the apocryphal heroism of the torpedoes. *La Patrie en Danger*, the organ turned by the venerable Blanqui, died a natural death. There was a demonstration to-day in front of the residence of Victor Hugo. Its object was to dissuade the poet from his proclaimed intention of going out unarmed against the enemy, with the battery of civic artillery to which his two sons belonged. The demonstration succeeded in its object. This civic artillery was vermilion Republican; Count Rochefort de Luçay was a gunner in it, so that there was no truth in the rumour that

he had let his head on hire to a lecturer on phrenology since he had retired from public life, and was moping about majestically with the boast of Garnier-Pagès in his mouth—“*J'ai gouverné la France.*”

On the 9th, General Trochu wrote from Vincennes, praying that the four Prussian officers, who had been insulted, might be sent to him that he might negotiate their exchange. The Governor was evidently very much annoyed, and justly, that those gentlemen should have been discourteously treated. They were dining with their interpreter at Notta's, on the boulevard Poissonière, in civilian attire, when they were rudely accosted by two persons at a table close by, who called on them to show their papers. Those Parisian patriots forgot that there were four captive French marshals in Germany.

On the 10th, the Government published two despatches of Prussian manufacture, brought in by pigeons captured at the same time as the balloon “Daguerre.” They were to the effect that Rouen was occupied by the enemy, who was marching on Cherbourg; that Bourges and Tours were threatened, and that there was famine and mourn-

ing everywhere. One of these despatches bore the signature of M. Lavertujon, of the *Journal Officiel*, who had never left Paris. This was a clumsy manœuvre.

On the 11th, there was a penury of bread, owing to a panic among the housekeepers that the loaf was shortly to be rationed. Queues were formed outside the bakers' shops in various quarters, despite the fearful cold. A note from Jules Ferry, which forbade biscuits to be made except by the army-bakers, did not tend to calm the troubled city. A letter was published in the *Figaro* from the almoner of the Mobs of the Hérault, giving the names of thirty officers of the 38th, 42nd, 118th, 121st, 122nd and 126th Regiments taken prisoners in the recent battles, as communicated to him by a Prussian staff-officer. Only two of them were wounded. On the same authority, we learned that 1,020 prisoners of other ranks were taken. Not a word of this was breathed in the official report.

On the 12th, a proclamation was issued reassuring the population as to the provisions, and declaring that there was no intention to ration the

bread. "We were yet far removed from the period when provisions would become insufficient." Good Lord! how innocent these very provisional rulers took us to be! We were living on black coffee, ashy bread and cat's-meat (and not enough of it at that), and yet we were far removed from scarcity! The joke may have been good, but had a sting in it, like that of Count von Moltke in swapping four officers of the Army of the Loire for the four Germans who had been insulted in the restaurant.

The postman's knock was a very rare sound now; the visits of the little functionaries in shabby olive tunic and glazed shako, who make their rounds with open box in front hanging from their necks, were as few and far between as those of angels. Most of them were old soldiers, and letter-carrying having been pretty much of a sinecure for weeks, they had been organized into a special battalion of the National Guard—naturally a *bataillon de marche*.

On the 13th, the postman surprised me by laying five letters on my table. All, I need hardly premise, were from the area within the lines of invest-



ment, and are free to the public as samples of the correspondence one received at the period. Here is the first :

“Colonel Hickory P. Shooter, special correspondent of the *Springfield Spread Eagle*, begs to inform his friends and the public generally that he is now open to accept invitations to dinner on reduced conditions.”

Ingenuous Colonel ! I opine the latter clause had reference to his own reduced condition, though he did not say so. With singular thoughtlessness for a Yankee, he failed to add that he was prepared to dispense with napkins where a dozen invitations were sent at a time. But pleasantry apart—and this pleasantry of the Colonel (naturally I suppress his real name) was really not without point at the price butter was—those gentlemen who had stopped without a clear understanding from their banker that he would keep his doors and their credit open were in hard case. A friend of mine—those things *will* happen—went to pawn

a gold watch with a Commissionnaire of the Mont de Piété, in the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. Two tall Americans, very elegantly dressed, were there before him, and were in process of hypothecating a diamond bracelet. They never suspected that my friend understood English.

"By Jove, Harry," said one, "I'm ready to sink with shame! I was never in such a place as this before."

"Durned," joined in the other, "if I'd feel so funky at popping the question."

"Does this article belong to you, monsieur?" inquired the Commissionnaire, handling the ornament after he had examined the passport.

"*Oui, oui! à moi.*"

Droll country United States must be, the Frenchman may have thought, where the men wear bracelets; he said nothing, however, but smiled.

Another anecdote, of which an Englishman settled in Paris was the hero. He told me, on his last call to his banker to draw his allowance, they entered into conversation, as usual.

"Anything new?" queried the visitor.

"All I have to tell you in the shape of news is that if communications are not re-established with England before the end of the year, I can't let you have any more money."

My informant added, "The fellow who said that has two hundred thousand francs of mine in Railway Obligations in his possession ; there's a French banker for you."

But the letters are getting cold on the table. Here is the second of the batch, a circular from "Ours," summoning me to duty :

<p>"IX ARRONDISSEMENT,  <i>Quartier Saint Georges,</i>  <i>Section B,</i>  <i>Rue Pigalle, No. 6.</i></p>	<p>"RÉPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE,  <i>Corps Civique de Sécurité,</i>  <i>Paris, le 12 Décembre,</i>  1870.</p>
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"ORDRE DE SERVICE.

"MONSIEUR BLANK,—

"Demeurant rue Blank, No. Blank, se rendra le Jeudi, 14 D<sup>bre</sup>, à 7 heures très-précises de matin, rue Pigalle, No, 6, pour faire le service qui lui sera commandé.

(Signed)      "*Le Chef de Section*"  
(An illegible scrawl).

The only comment to be made on this production was, that the reaction was creeping in. Formerly these circulars used to be addressed to the "Citoyen Blank;" now, as you perceive, the "Citoyen" had developed into a "Monsieur." The third and fourth communications that turned up were of a class, unfortunately, too frequent since the affliction of a siege had fallen upon Paris. The one was an appeal for old clothes and winter covering for the poor of the ward; the other, in black-bordered envelope, a letter "*de faire part*" at the funeral of a charming wee child of four, who had died on her mother's breast while papa was away on the ramparts. The last in the bundle explains itself. It came from an Irishman whom I have already mentioned:

"The humble petition of Patrick McDermott, on  
the broad of his back in the ambulance of  
the Grand Hôtel,

"Respectfully sheweth—

"That he is laid up with one of the hereditary  
diseases of the loved island of sorrow; known to the

faculty as *tussis Hibernica*, and to the vulgar as aggravated bronchitis.

“That he is put to the pin of his collar to beguile his sickness, and has endeavoured to drive dull care away by the effort to solve various intricate problems: *ex. gratiâ*, what has become of the Empress’s little Nubian slave? where are the clowns and piebald horses of the Circus? how many hundred yards of drum-major have been manufactured out of the former corps of Cent Gardes and the like?—and has only succeeded in convincing himself that *atra cura* sits on pillow as on pillion.

“That, under those circumstances, he craves the loan of any book in the English language, save and except the military novels of Messrs. Maxwell, Grant and Lever.

“Which being granted,

“Your petitioner, as in duty bound, will  
ever pray,

“ETC., ETC., ETC.”

Obviously Pat, who was prepared for ribbons but did not bargain for rheums, was tired of this un-

chivalric reality of soldiering, and half inclined to sing with Tennyson :

“Oh ! who would fight, and march, and countermarch,  
Be shot for sixpence in a battlefield,  
And shovelled up into a bloody trench  
Where no one knows? But let me live my life.”

I sent him Clegg's “Essay on the Architecture of Machinery,” and the “Meteorological Society's Transactions” for the previous twelvemonth.

It rained heavily during the night of the 14th, and on the following day the thermometer was up to 10 degrees Centigrade, the average of the year at Paris—in other words, the weather had relaxed from the severity of a rigorous winter to the softness of early spring. The sudden change, though unhealthy, was more advantageous to the garrison than otherwise, as it seriously retarded the conveyance of the enemy's convoys, the roads being one paste of mud ; besides, had the frost continued much longer, the Seine would have been so thick with ice-floes that navigation would have been impeded, and the gun-boats would have had to lie in some inner bend of the river, locked up like so

many whalers in the Polar seas. The cruel frost, however, held long enough to deprive many a poor victim of the recent combats of the chance of recovery. Baron Saillard, commandant of the 1st battalion of the Mobiles of Paris, who received four gunshot wounds while leading his men to the attack of Epinay, died yesterday morning at the precise moment that his promotion in the Legion of Honour, for his gallant conduct, was gazetted. The deceased had been a warm Imperialist, and had gained some distinction in the diplomatic service.

The first corps of Ducrot's army—that commanded by General Blanchard—was dissolved, and Malroy's division, which had belonged to it, was partly turned over to the Third Army. This modification in the constitution of his forces by General Trochu was accounted for officially by the serious losses the first corps suffered at Villiers; but there were busybodies who pretended that the change had to be made to prevent Generals Ducrot and Blanchard from coming to fisticuffs. Both were game-birds, and, though fighting on the same side, could not be carried to the pit in the same bag.

Generals Blanchard and Malroy were to have commands under Vinoy. Apropos of Blanchard, he did a sensible thing in ordering the sheepskins served out to his men to be dyed black. When will routine be so far overcome that helmets and cuirasses shall no longer be worn of glittering brass or polished steel; that pipeclayed belts shall give place to untanned leather; that bearskins, shapzkas, busbies, cocked-hats and the like holiday paraphernalia shall be sent to the property-rooms of the theatres, or put aside carefully for dress-parades?

The Government of National Defence could hardly have been accused of niggardliness in its outlay on printer's ink. On the 15th of December, yet another proclamation stared from the walls and informed us that there was no need to be frightened about bread—there was enough and to spare; only housewives must not be running to the bakers' in panic and buying up other persons' shares with their own. If more sacrifices were necessary, Paris was prepared to make them for honour and country; but the only privation her rulers saw fit to impose



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for the present was a lowering in the quality, not the quantity, of her daily bread. As soon as the existing stock of white loaves was exhausted, the wholesome, agreeable brown cake universally eaten by the peasants, and none other, would be permitted to be offered for sale. Meat, we were assured, was not wanting either, and would continue to be distributed as heretofore—that is to say, at the liberal rate of one-tenth of a pound per stomach per diem. Bread and meat (“the double base of alimentation,” as the Government averred, O ye vegetarians!) being thus assured, the situation was satisfactory; indeed, one might say unexpectedly so after three months of siege. In this wise the placard perorated, “We have all sworn that no effort will be spared on our part to save our country, and we shall succeed by force of calmness, vigilance and courage.”

A decree also appeared disbanding a battalion of the National Guard known as the Volunteers of the 147th. These precious volunteers refused to march to Rosny the previous morning, on the plea that the wives of their married comrades had not received the allowance of sevenpence a day during

their last absence, on service, outside the fortifications. Of course this would not have happened if the men had been properly commanded; but a strict discipline could not be maintained while the absurd system prevailed of electing the officers. The captain who has got his epaulettes by suffrage has given hostages to the mob, and will not easily affront the risk of losing his popularity by severity. Under this system some very shameful instances of promotion occurred; fellows were named battalion chiefs, not for their military knowledge, but because they were conspicuous as agitators in the secret societies or brawlers in the twopenny-half-penny discussion clubs. They proved how dangerous to everyone but the enemy they could be by their conduct on the 31st of October at the Hôtel de Ville, and on the 28th of November at the rifle-pits of Créteil. Others—gaol-birds, with speculation in their ambition—succeeded in having themselves named captains by a lot of credulous idiots, so as to get the handling of the company's pay, which they invariably turned over to their own uses. Apart from these gutter agents and galley-slave officers,

there was a class which was hardly less offensive—the gasconaders. These gentry were to be known by the particular sign that they were always point-device in their accoutrements, affected a military slang, told their men to shift their arms from one shoulder to another with the gruff voice of Cambronne to the Old Guard, and wore “a swelling and a martial outside.” They were an amusing study when they realized that they were about to have a taste of the real quality of campaigning; the struggle for the mastery between pride in their uniform and disinclination for the service could be plainly read in their countenances. It would be a mistake to take the Bobadils that ran from a shadow, and the Volunteers of the 147th that would not even put themselves in the way of being frightened by a shadow, as samples of the war-battalions of the National Guard. Both those corps were organized irregularly before the decree of the 8th of November mobilized the civic force, and placed a different class of men at the head of the regiments of Paris. Of the twenty-seven lieutenant-colonels first named, all possessed soldierly aptitude,

more or less, and some had given proof that they could handle troops in the field: for example, M. Lardier, commanding the 1st, had been a colonel in the Line; Jacob, of the 2nd, a modest veteran, had bled for his country more than once; Van Hoorick, of the 5th, a Hollander, served fourteen years in the Turcos, in Algeria, and won the cross at their head at Magenta; de Crisanoy, of the 9th, was a hardy sailor, famous by a life of devotedness; Jametel, of the 13th, a Crimean hero; De Brancion, Ibos, and Langlois, of the 16th, 17th, and 18th respectively, distinguished themselves under Paris (the last named smelt gunpowder in the La Plata campaigns of 1839-40-41, and in Morocco, under the Prince de Joinville); Rochebrune, of the 19th, had fought in the Crimea, Italy, and Poland, where he led the insurgents in 1863; and Arthur de Fonvielle, of the 27th (brother to Wilfrid of the balloons, and Ulrich of the Auteuil tragedy), got his baptism of blood in Caucasia, combating by the side of Schamyl against the Russians.

A number of promotions and permutations in the

active army followed on the recent actions, and many distinctions were conferred, the most notable of which are worth recording. The Sailors and Marines reaped the lion's share of honours. I pass over the officers, with whom courage is a tradition, to come to the names of some of the hard-handed forecastle heroes. The military medal was granted, among others, to Gunner Renault for his skill in placing a battery at Avron; to Boatswain Tersiquel for his steadiness in laying the pontoons at Brie; and to Quartermaster Cheruel for his never-say-die determination at Epinay. This plucky sea-dog was wounded in the hand, but got a comrade to tie a handkerchief round the bleeding member, and never budged from the spot, though bullets were flying round like flies over a sugar-hogshead. Sailor Seujean, few will deny, richly deserved the strip of yellow ribbon he got the right to wear by his conduct at the Gare-aux-Bœufs, where he lifted up the body of his commandant under fire and took it to the rear. He had a gallant rival—Sergeant de Tryon de Montalembert, of the Marines (how blood will tell!)—who volunteered to cross the open for a long

distance, under a heavy fire from the enemy, to carry an order to a battalion in advance.

The three battalions of the Mobiles of La Vendée must have suffered fearfully in the fights of the 30th of November and 2nd of December. Running my eyes over the list of promotions, I discovered that two out of the three *chefs de bataillon*, one captain, two lieutenants, and a sub-lieutenant were killed in action; and that three captains, five lieutenants, and two sub-lieutenants were missing. Fourteen sergeants were raised to the epaulettes in one batch.

There was another proclamation on the morning of the 16th, this making requisition of all the horses, mules, and asses within the lines of investment, and giving their owners warning that, in future, they were only to look upon themselves as their guardians until called upon to give them up, when they would be paid for each animal at rates varying from 1f. 25c. to 1f. 75c. the kilo (6d. to 8d. the pound English) of their living weight. A bundle of despatches from Gambetta, brought in by three pigeons yesterday, was published. The last was dated Tours, the

11th instant. They told us that the Army of the Loire was in retreat, that the Delegation of Tours had left for Bordeaux, and that Rouen was occupied by the enemy.

“When sorrows come, they come not single spies,  
But in battalions.”

And there were optimists forty-eight hours ago who could detect the echoes of Bourbaki's guns pounding the Prussians at Versailles, in the reports from some new pieces being tried outside the enceinte !

There was a culpable inactivity at this epoch : nothing was doing at the outposts ; the troops were suffering from anæmia ; the city was deprived of gas ; the death-rate had gone up to nigh 3,000 a week ; and drunkenness was shamefully on the increase among the National Guards. One battalion, the 200th, was in such a wholesale condition of blustering intoxication that it had to be sent to the rear by General Thomas. Trochu felt that he must assert himself somehow, and accordingly he had a notice put up that from noon on the 19th the

gates would be shut. This meant that there was to be another sortie; but before the sortie could come off there was such a hotch-potch of orders and counter-orders from the Louvre, that general disarray was the inevitable consequence; and a spell of weather most favourable to action—dry and mild enough to rear myrtles—had to be let pass. Trochu could not have much hope of succeeding; he had more armed men under his orders, it is true, than the Germans; but he had not a larger army. Still, it was imperative that something should be done.

The pinched, wan faces of begging children made appeal at every street-corner and at the door of every restaurant. Only one diminutive plate of meat (so called by courtesy) was to be had for each customer at Duval's well-known houses. A couple of carcasses of skinned wolves were to be seen outside a butcher's stall in the Faubourg St. Honoré; the herd of antelopes at the Jardin d'Acclimatation had been sold off at a rate that took one's breath away to hear; water-rats and the common domestic cat fetched fancy prices; a friend of mine had been



offered one hundred francs for a fat poodle ; and the man who can have a pound of marbly steak cut from the rump of a horse on his table for the Christmas dinner will be a niggard if he do not invite at least one friend to handle a fork with him. Frankly, I had not so far—that is, to my own knowledge—eaten of dog, cat, or rat ; but, like ninety-nine out of a hundred, I had been eating horse for six weeks, and was very thankful to have it. My household was on a regimen of one scanty meal a day, and a collation of bread and milkless coffee. Yet, though not bursting with vitality, we were in fair health—perhaps mankind eats too much in periods of plenty—in fair health, I repeat, and in as good spirits as could be expected of the denizens of a “double, double, toil and trouble” caldron of starvation, shells, and black smallpox.

On the 20th, we had three funerals of victims of the Great Sortie. The first was that of the youthful Baron de Cambray, who had suffered amputation of a leg and an arm, and expired after an agony of one-and-twenty days. The second was that of M. Paul Richard, an officer of Mobiles, and brother to

the Minister of Fine Arts under the Ollivier régime. The third who was carried to his long home was a worthy priest, the Abbé Blanc, who had been wounded in the leg while attending to a dying Mobile from the department of the Indre, to whose battalion he had been attached as chaplain.

Albeit hearses were common in the thoroughfares, the active National Guards, who were mustering for service in their parti-coloured capotes of blue and grey and billiard-cloth green, were frisky. Their comrades who were to stop with the sedentary companies treated them to copious libations, and songs were sung, and jests bandied, and vainglorious sentiments declaimed over the liquor. Paul and Pierre and Jacques were boisterously merry. They may have thought war was like those brilliant reviews at Longchamps during the Exhibition year, or the little sham-fights on the plain of St. Maur, or the taking of Pekin on Midsummer Sundays in M. Arnault's hippodrome at Passy. The shield has a reverse. Real soldiering—especially with modern arms—is the most uncomfortable, prosaic, discouraging trade out. War in midwinter is doleful ; but

war in midwinter when rations are scanty is more than man can bear. There was some amusement in it in the times of the stout Horatii, or when the *condottieri* hacked at each other for a long day and had a list of casualties of one, and plenty of booty at the close; it was even comparatively supportable in the Peninsula, although Mickey Free did complain that he was

“ —sick of paradin’,  
Through wet and cowl’d wadin’,  
Or standin’ all night to be shot in a trinch.”

But to-day, faugh! ask the privates in any of the regiments of Paris what they thought of it. All the poetry has been squeezed out of warfare by the breech-loader. There were some redeeming qualities in the fighting of yore: there was excitement in the clanging of the yew bow of Cressy, the swinging blows of the brown bill, or the crash of the battle-axe; there was fair play in the bayonet of Badajos and the Brown Bess of Waterloo, and some chance for poor human life. But now valour has resigned in favour of science; warriors burrow in holes like rabbits, take long shots at horizons of

smoke, and receive long shots from invisible enemies. 'So much the better! The more expensive and disagreeable the irrational pastime of human butchery becomes, the nearer the prospect of its going out of fashion.

To nerve the Parisians for the emergency, Field Marshal Jules Favre issued a manifesto bidding them be of good cheer (on short commons in banquetting-halls lit with petroleum), and not to be impatient; for that final victory was certain. The Governor, not to be outdone, followed this up by a discharge of printer's ink, declaring that he was about to put himself at the head of the army, and that an important movement was to be made by the break of next morning. And Paris rejoiced, and embraced Pierre and Paul and Jacques of the war-battalions, and Pierre and Paul and Jacques, alas! too often translated the advice to gird their loins for the combat by moistening their throats.

## CHAPTER IV.

The Second Great Sortie—March-out of the War-Battalions—Notes about Bourget—The Marines to the Front—Bloodshed among the Prussian Guards—Clasped in Death—Repulse of the Freeshooters of the Press—Ruses of the Enemy—Vinoy's Advance—The Neglectful Commissariat—A Midnight Alarm—Shooting of General Blaise—The Attack on the Isle of Chiard—Siberian Weather—The Frozen Sentry—Jules Claretie and the Wounded Prussian Officer—The French Effect a Retrograde Movement.

THE operations preliminary to the second great sortie began on the night of Tuesday, the 20th of December. After a council of war at the Louvre, Trochu left for the fort of Aubervilliers, to be nearer the scene of action. The main body destined to make the sally were camped outside Vincennes, but shortly after twilight they moved quietly northwards to the plateau of Romainville, and at two on the morning of Wednesday, the shortest day in the

year, midst the sudden rigour of a dull, deadly cold, were formed up in masses on the row of slopes sentinelled by the north-eastern forts. The men carried six days' rations in rice, coffee, meat, and biscuit. The allowance of wine and brandy was prudently left in charge of the commissariat. The proportion of artillery was large, and many of the batteries were supplied with the recently cast breech-loading 14-pounders. In addition to the Line and other regulars and the Mables, a respectable force of the active battalions of the National Guard was held in readiness. The Government stated that one hundred battalions were outside the enceinte, which would give a strength of about 60,000 men ; but that was an exaggeration.

The city was roused from its sleep between Tuesday and Wednesday by the beating of the *générale* in various quarters, and the assembling of these battalions, which had been kept back to the last moment. On their heels—ominous presage—left a lengthened train of ambulance waggons and hospital attendants, a regiment of monks in their black *soutanes*, a new corps of stretcher-bearers

taken from the unarmed National Guards, the mutes of the Undertakers' Company, and the grave-diggers of the cemeteries, uniformed for their dismal duties in coarse white blouses. It must have been a trial for the relatives and friends, who escorted those who had just passed the city gates, to have met this funereal procession on their return.

Bourget was one of the main points of attack. This locality, round which for the second time a bloody interest centred, deserves a description. It is a straggling village of some eight hundred inhabitants, on the high-road to Lille, a cannon-shot outside the fort of Aubervilliers, and some three miles to the right of St. Denis. Among the historic memorabilia of the place are noted the halt of Napoleon I. for meditation there before he re-entered Paris on the 20th of June, 1815, and the halt of Louis Philippe in 1832 to bleed a postilion who lay in a state of insensibility from a fall from a horse. I have never seen any caricature of the Man of Destiny, with his heel on the neck of the France that lay comatose after Waterloo, as grim sequel of all his battlings. Glory is sacred for the

most spirituel of nations, but humanity is treated with less respect. The honest king idolized of grocers, the Ulysses *redivivus* of Mr. Disraeli, was represented lancing France, drawing pieces of red gold instead of blood from her arm, and underneath was written "*Le Grand Saigneur*." There are some market-gardens and nurseries at Bourget, on the banks of a dirty gutter which we shall compliment so far as to call a river—la Mollette. But the hamlet is not solely agricultural; it has pretensions as a seat of manufactures, based on the possession of establishments for the production of sticking-plaster and indiarubber shoes. To the left front of Bourget are Stains and Dugny; to the right is Blanc-Mesnil. Passing along the Lille high-road for a mile or so beyond the village to where it crosses the Morée, one meets the Pont-Iblon, where the Prussians had constructed a battery. To the rear of Bourget—that is, nearer to Paris—sweeps the line of rail to Soissons.

The position was said to be one of no importance when it was held by the Prussians, but whenever the besieged troops succeeded in occupying it, the



circumstance was regarded as a success. Why a position of no importance should be so perseveringly coveted by both sides, is a problem a mere civilian cannot pretend to elucidate.

At half-past seven, the signal to commence the drama of slaughter was given by gun-fire from Aubervilliers. Ere the boom had died away, a heavy cannonade was opened on Stains and Bourget by Aubervilliers and the forts clustering round St. Denis concurrently with a battery of position, on the road to Courneuve. A couple of batteries mounted on cuirassed locomotives, steaming along the Soissons railway, also joined in. The morning was foggy, which must have considerably interfered with the precision of aim. After about half an hour the big guns slackened, and the rattle of musketry was heard. The infantry were advancing on Bourget. Two columns had orders to push on simultaneously. One of these, headed by a battalion of Marines, led by M. Lamothe-Thenet, a navy captain, revived the best traditions of the service to which it belonged by its quick and dogged valour. The 138th of the Line was behind it, and the 10th

and 12th battalions of the Mobiles of the Seine were in support. The mission of the Marines was to cut, burn, and destroy. They went into the fray hatchet in hand and rifle slung on their back, as in the assault of the Gare-aux-Bœufs on the 29th November, and had a desperate hand-to-hand, house-to-house struggle with a detachment of the Prussian Royal Guard at the entrance of the village. They succeeded in getting into some houses, and held them for nigh three hours, but had to fall back in the end. They brought with them about 100 prisoners, but must have left at least an equal number of their own in the hands of the enemy. Of 600 who rushed forward, 279 were wanting to the roll-call when the affair was over. Of fourteen Marine officers engaged, four—the Viscount Duquesne and Messieurs Laborde, Moran, and Pelle-treau — were killed, and four others seriously wounded. The 10th Mobiles had their lieutenant-colonel, the commandant, the adjutant-major, a captain, and a lieutenant put *hors de combat* almost at the first discharge. Even the Germans, who are not lavish of encomium, had to admit that the

French "fought remarkably well" at this second storming of Bourget. The struggle had its moral. The stormers were not raw levies or enthusiastic amateurs, but robust, resolute, seasoned fighters, with the vigour of ocean-breezes in their frames. In that furious stress of strong men locked in a death-grip the Royal Guards of Prussia lost fourteen officers and four hundred rank and file. A very touching anecdote was related of one old soldier of the sea; he cleared a barricade and summoned an officer behind it to surrender. The Prussian answered by three shots from a revolver, and the Marine fell with a bullet in his shoulder, almost at the same moment that his enemy was brought down by a bayonet-thrust from one of his comrades. The tide of conflict surged on, and the two men, both mortally wounded, were left writhing side by side. As the officer was in his agony, the "rattle" foretokening death already shaking his throat, the Frenchman dragged himself towards him and put a brandy-flask to his lips. The Prussian opened his eyes and recognised him. An hour afterwards, as the Marines withdrew, French-

man and Prussian were corpses, their cold hands clasped. They had forgotten their animosities on the brink of the common grave. The French laboured under terrible disadvantages; they were in the open, while the Prussians fired on them from the windows and cellars, and some of their cannon in the rear covered them with projectiles.

While the column of which the Marines were the steel tip was launched against the left of the village, the second, composed of the Freeshooters of the Press and the 134th of the Line, starting from Courneuve, was sent against it from the right. There can be no disguising the truth, this attack was promptly and stiffly denied. The French recoiled before the Germans, who were skilfully covered by barricades and breastworks. The account of the share the Freeshooters had in the conflict is from their Adjutant-Major, and consequently cannot be regarded as unfriendly to his command. At six, his slender battalion, some three hundred rank and file, took up its march, and by seven was ranged beside a lamp-black factory between the Lille road and Drancy. Four pieces of

light artillery, stationed to its left on the road directly in front of Bourget, sought to prepare the advance by a scouring fire, combined with that of two cuirassed locomotives to its right, two battalions at Courneuve, and the heavy ordnance of the forts of Aubervilliers and the Est. After half an hour's pounding, "*sans grand résultat*," the first and second companies of the Freeshooters extended in skirmishing order, and advanced at the gymnastic step—a pace faster than our double—with the intention of entering the village by the left; the third company, guided by my informant, entered by the right, and the fourth, headed by Captain Fournier, advanced on the full front. The French showed courage, coolness, and audacity.

"But what do these avail against an invisible enemy lurking like a lynx, who picks you down from behind his loopholes? We fire on the walls without effect, and the walls vomit death."

The Adjutant-Major added that the Prussians tried several tricks, crying once in French, "Long live France! we are victorious!" to bring them on; and another time endeavouring to deceive them by an

imitation of the French call, "Form on your supports" on their bugles. At two, the order to retreat was given; the baffled column retired, carrying some of the wounded with it; and the forts renewed the cannonade. The Freeshooters accounted for their non-success by the want of simultaneity in the attack, and the terrible rigour of the weather. Frail pleas. The former accident was their own fault, the Marines were punctual; the latter should have been equally bad for the Germans. But there was something behind, the blame of which could not be laid on Mother Nature. The men had been without food for ten hours. Roland, the commandant of the little battalion, had his horse shot under him; Captain Fournier and his lieutenant and six men were killed, and twenty-five wounded. Trochu and Ducrot were in this corner of the terrain, and ordered up three batteries of field-pieces, which opened on the enemy, and seemed to do him considerable damage. His guns at the Pont-Iblon and Blanc-Mesnil were reduced to silence, and a portion of Ducrot's army was enabled to go forward to the farm of Groslay and Drancy

to the south of Bourget—an advance, but not much of an advance at best.

In the meantime, away on the extreme right, a heavy fire had been turned on Bondy, and several German batteries appeared to have been sorely hammered about. The new French guns were easily handled, and threw correctly; but the men grumbled that they could not load them as rapidly as those in use before. The batteries on the patch of table-land at Avron, and the weighty marine ordnance in Nogent, gave powerful aid in this artillery duel, the advantages of which indisputably rested with the French. At half-past three, there was a cessation in the loud pealing of the great guns, and the infantry divisions of Malroy and Blaise (Vinoy's army) marched into possession of Neuilly-sur-Marne, Ville-Evrard, and the Maison-Blanche almost without burning a cartridge. The idea was to push this—the most serious of the meditated attacks—towards the bridge connecting the German position at either side of the Marne at Gournay, and the dépôt of provisions and war-munitions at Chelles, on the Strasburg line. Ville-

Evrard is not a hamlet, nor yet a château, but simply an immense lunatic-asylum, in advance of Neuilly; and the Maison-Blanche is nothing more than a farmhouse close by the railway track on the road to the bridge of Gournay. The Prussian batteries at Noisy-le-Grand (at the other side of the Marne, opposite Neuilly) maintained a stubborn fight with the French artillery on the plateau of Avron, and somewhat disquieted the advance. It was here General Fave, of the artillery, was wounded by one of the comparatively rare shells which told on the French, while moving forward some heavy batteries in support. The losses during the day did not exceed one hundred, killed and wounded. In this movement the war-battalions of the National Guard first sniffed gunpowder. Five of them were directed from the fort of Rosny on Neuilly. The Prussians had evacuated the village before their entry, but though the Parisians had not the opportunity of handling their weapons, they did not escape scot-free. A few conical shot from the wood of Bondy hopped in their midst, sending to earth half-a-dozen of their number, and cutting a



sutler's horse clean in two. They stopped at Neuilly, arms at the shoulder and knapsacks on back, till five in the afternoon *without food*, when they were brought back to Rosny. In fact, the troops were withdrawn from all the positions taken up during the day to the trenches in the rear, the heads of the columns only being left to guard them. In the official report, the expression was "to the trenches which formed the *points d'appui* of the prepared battlefield," which was somewhat peculiar. This looked as if General Trochu meant to entice the enemy to come out and give him fight on the piece of ground he had mapped out within range of his batteries of position. As the statement was official, it must, of course, be believed; but it was hard to credit General Trochu, or rather the Prussians, with so much innocence. Though the Parisians were brought into line, it was plain to observers who took a more reasonable valuation of their prowess than their own, that the good General had no great confidence in the train-bands bold. The *corps de soutien* of Vinoy's army, consisting of the Foot Gendarmes, the Forest Guards, and the

Douaniers, which had not been employed in the real sortie—that on the line to Villiers—was kept close at hand on the 21st for emergencies. When a chief is thus forced to bring his reliable troops to the fore, it looks bad, not for the chief's sense, but for the solid qualities of his following.

In the night of the 21st, the French position at Ville-Evrard was attacked unexpectedly (*à l'improviste* is the word in General Vinoy's report). As well as the mysterious business could be made out from the cloudiness that intentionally surrounded it, a number of Saxons remained behind, hidden in the cellars, when their comrades evacuated the building in the forenoon. Perhaps they stopped of their own accord; perhaps they could not leave with safety, having been hampered by the bombardment the French poured on the place. At all events, in the small hours they, and comrades who came to their assistance, attacked the French Grand-Gardes. The French were surprised, and some of their officers *ran away!* The authority for this is General Vinoy. The battalions of the 111th and 112th, which had taken the position during the day, suc-

ceeded in restoring discipline and baffling the attempt of the Saxons, who were massacred to a man. But gallant old General Blaise was shot dead. He left behind him a wife and six children whom he dearly loved. The last entry in a diary he kept was: "God protect France, my family, and myself." The ball that killed him passed through a decoration on his coat, and close by a copy of the "Imitation of Christ" in his breast-pocket.

While these events were passing in the north and east, General Noël, who held Mont Valérien, was active in the west. He made a strong demonstration on the left of his front to occupy the enemy at Montretout, on the centre towards Buzenval and Longboyau, and on the right on the isle of Chiard, which he occupied. This is a ridge of land in the Seine between Rueil and Chatou, traversed by the railway to St. Germain. The movement there was simply a feint. To enter the island a bridge of boats had to be thrown across. At two o'clock on the morning of the 21st, the pontonniers and sappers from Mont Valérien began their work, covered by the Freeshooters of Paris spread on

the river-bank. Three boats were afloat before the enemy showed himself; as the fourth was being committed to the water, a hot fusillade was started from the other side and several men fell. For an hour volleys were rapidly exchanged, but the Prussians had a decided advantage, as they fired from behind breastworks and used *fusils de rempart*. At seven the French artillery came up, and the Freeshooters, finding the pontoon impracticable, succeeded in getting into the island by the broken railway-bridge, and had a struggle with its occupants, wherein they held their own for three hours; but lost their Captain, Haas, and Commandant, Faure, the engineer-officer detached from Mont Valérien. When General Noël, of that citadel, heard of their fate, he quietly observed, "Their deaths were not useless." That was *their* funeral oration; it is more than all brave soldiers get in war-times.

Such was the sum of the day's doings, more travail than gains, most depressing of results. Truly the temperature was of a merciless inclemency that raw, misty, darksome 21st of December. The cold literally froze the martial ardour out of the French.

The glass had fallen below freezing-point since the previous day—a lowering of ten degrees Centigrade in a few hours. The infantry on the plateau of Romainville, although they had hung their blankets around and in front of them, shivered like so many dogs in wet sacks; their teeth chattered, their faces were leaden hued, and their hands red as pieces of raw beef. How they could have fingered a trigger if the necessity arose, and how those for whom the necessity did arise at Bourget and elsewhere managed, is more than I can make out. It was as much as one could do to hold a telescope for a few minutes; every limb was gelid, and as the moisture of the breath oozed out it stiffened on the beard, and made it sticky with icicles. The official report said: “If we had not been thwarted by the state of the weather, there is no doubt Bourget would have remained in our hands.” That was not entirely true, but there was more truth in it than in most official reports. The weather was, indeed, of a vile rigour, more trying than had been experienced for years. Several of the wounded men exposed for a few hours had been frost-bitten,

and *sixty deaths* resulted in a few nights from congelation. One case was recorded of a sentry found on an advanced post, frozen as he stood—turned, like Lot's wife, into a statue-like attitude of attention. When touched, he toppled over as if he had been a post set on end. Of a verity, it was ordeal beyond measure for these soft cits of the National Guard, accustomed to the luxuries of Paris life, to have to pass their first bivouac under a Polar sky, the more so as too many of them had prepared for it by getting disgracefully drunk on poisonous potato-spirit. General Trochu had ordered a portion of the troops to take out entrenching tools with them to raise a parapet on their positions as they occupied them; but pick and shovel soon became useless. The ground was like iron, and the attempt to make any impression on it had to be given up in despair. Before dismissing the affair at Bourget, it is due to M. Henri Rochefort to say that he was present as an amateur ambulancier during the temporary seizure of the village, and brought away a wounded man in his cab. Another literary man, M. Jules Claretie, was also there, and

had the questionable taste to lecture a Prussian prisoner, an officer of the Royal Guard, on the hideous enormity of the war his king was waging.

"It is three months exactly this very day since I left Berlin," said the Prussian.

"It depends on yourselves to return there, and stop this war, which is a crime," wantonly and absurdly remarked M. Jules Claretie.

"If it be a crime," proudly retorted the Prussian, "we purchase the right to it by our blood."

A humble Christian Brother was mortally injured while attending to one of the wounded at Bourget. The republican and free-thinking *Siècle*, the organ of the pot-house bourgeoisie, which is never happier than when flinging dirt at the members of the Order, accusing them of unnatural crimes and the like, consistently overlooked the dutiful death of Brother Netheline.

In reality, the whole series of operations were put a stop to on the first day. On the 22nd, the troops were on the alert in expectation of an attack, as the enemy had been observed making concentrations; but nothing came of them, and the cold was

so intense that a respite was hailed with joy. There was an undercurrent of murmurs among the Linesmen; they had had more than enough of it, and if their secret mind could be made known, nine out of ten of them would have voted for peace. There was nothing done on the 23rd, but the terrible cold continued. One could understand why the greatest of modern conquerors, the spoiled child of victory, had turned back from Moscow. The temperature was worse on the 24th, and on Christmas Eve the army had to withdraw on its cantonments, the cavalry and most of the National Guards returned to town, and the pretence of action had to be frankly laid by.

The second great sortie was as utter a miscarriage as the first. The cold had done for the one what the rise in the Marne had done for the other, and the superstitious began to think that the stars in their courses were leagued against the French.

It was puzzling to divine what Trochu's idea could have been in attempting to force a passage through the substantial barriers to the north. With whom was he to link hands outside? On what store was



he to depend for provisions ? His front was dominated by the German positions, forming an amphitheatre of which the heights of the Butte Pinson, Arnouville, Gonesse, Villepinte, and the forest of Bondy were the terraces. Sometimes one is tempted to believe that the entire adventure was a sham. Action was never engaged outside the range of the forts ; the mettle of the war-battalions of the National Guard was put to no genuine test ; and if the scheme of bursting out of the circle of investment had ever been seriously entertained, it got its *coup de grâce* at the outset in the repulse of the Marines.

## CHAPTER V.

*Acris Hyems*—A Fuel Famine—Novel Jewellery—Weary Christmas—Fat Churchyards—Mr. Labouchere Denounced—Unpopularity of England—The Writer's Private Proclamation—Artillery Attack on the East Forts—Over-confident Avron—Pride has a Fall—Monster Missiles—Erasure of a French Position—Castor and Pollux—Prices of Food—Ephemeral Literature—Sir Swelling Beardley—Too Many Freeshooters—The Tongues of Rumour—The New War-Council—Seeing the Old Year Out.

HEAVEN preserve me from spending such another Christmas Eve as that of 1870! The temperature was hyperborean. O'Donovan, whose pipe shook between his chattering teeth, told me there was no probability of alteration till the next change in the moon, and then the alteration might be from bad to worse. Those pastors, who conjure up to their flocks the abyss of perdition as an ice-bound region, may be right after all. Another friend, strong in meteorology, said that this was likely to be the

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most severe winter for forty years—an aurora borealis was always a sure sign of cold. But we might be able to rattle a four-in-hand across the Seine, as the aristocrats of the Faubourg St. Germain did a century ago; as Count Sandor, father of the Princess Metternich, drove over the Danube within the memory of living man. We might do so—that is if we had not eaten the team in advance; and the teams were fast disappearing now. Some splendid brood-mares had been poleaxed already; nay, Birdcatcher—no obscure English stallion, who once had fetched fifty thousand francs at the auctioneer's rostrum—had been laid under requisition for the shambles. It was enough to melt the heart of a stud-groom. We should have to cross the river on foot, that was plain, if it did not harden with phenomenal quickness. The cold was more than I could bear; it pierced to the marrow; and wood was getting dearer, moister, and scarcer. The Government posted a proclamation—the Government could not do any good by stealth—notifying in flowery language that trees were to be levelled for firing in the woods of Vincennes, and Boulogne,

and elsewhere; but many starving wretches had been beforehand with the Government, and had torn down palings, ripped up park-seats, and broken off branches to warm themselves with. Who could blame them while the glass was below freezing-point? Self-preservation is nature's first law, and the father with a shivering wife and children and no fuel, because of this unchristian war, obeys that law, and hardly transgresses any other, when he joins in the pillage. Cold is enjoyable when one is bedded in furs and careering behind the sleigh-bells in Canada, or curling on a Highland loch, with hot toddy within and thick tartan plaids without, or skating on the Serpentine to promote an appetite for a dinner of good Smithfield beef, not tough animal fibre; but in hungry besieged Paris there were enough of trials without that. And yet hungry besieged Paris showed no outward symptoms of giving in; its rulers issued a decree suspending the *Patrie* for three days for having published military news; the people were making donations of cannon for the defence (to-day it was the turn of the Auvergnats, who presented two),

and the postman was round in the morning methodically as ever to put in his claims for his annual New Year's gift. The New Year is the great festival in France, as in America and Scotland, and Christmas is a secondary affair. The Parisians have a custom of making the *réveillon*—that is to say, waxing mirthful on white wine and black pudding—before pouring in to the Midnight Mass with its music and torches and steaming crowds. There was no Midnight Mass this year—that was a privation naughty Paris could endure; but, alas! there was no black pudding either. And that gala dinner to-morrow? What sayeth old Tusser in his “Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry”?

“At Christmas play and make good cheer,  
For Christmas comes but once a year.”

This writer was willing, but where was one to go to market? The traditional roast goose was literally a *rara avis in terris*, and must, perforce, be blotted from the bill of fare; a lean cock could be had a bargain for five-and-thirty shillings if one knew where to look for it, but that was a day's

journey to discover ; even an omelet had become a luxury, since eggs were quoted at 1,883 francs the thousand, wholesale, the purchaser to pay all expenses of portorage. A few doors from my quarters at No. 1, Rue de Clichy, the shop of Bouquet, a jeweller and watchmaker, had been converted by its owner into a provision-store. Where an elaborate timepiece formerly raised its chased front in the middle of his window a dead rabbit was stretched at full length, flanked by a plate of minnows and three tiny sparrows ; while higher up half-a-dozen hen-eggs were arranged in a circle, like a necklet of monster pearls. Had he the luck to have secured a turkey-egg for his collection, he would surely have cushioned it in eider-down, and framed it under a glass dome, like the Koh-i-noor. The establishment of the *bijoutier* turned *marchand de comestibles* was constantly surrounded by a gaping crowd, like that of the dog-butcher at No. 5, in the Rue Blanche close by ; but his wares were too costly when one considered how long the siege might be protracted.

As to the dogs, I love them, none more fondly ; but not on the spit. It was a poor look-out for a

Christmas dinner, O'Donovan remarked ; but with hunger for sauce and good humour for spice, we were resolved to make the best of it, and try manfully to be happy.

Put the leg of an old chair on the fire, Madame Wilma. Imagination can transform it into a Yule-log ; we can picture the white-berried mistletoe and the merry maids under it in the wreaths of smoke from Nicotia's shrine, that bowl of honest clay, and, hark ! is not that the music of the waits ? *Eheu !* No imagination, rich soever though it be, can mistake the horrid rumbling of the deadly tubes of steel and bronze for the sacred mellow minstrelsy of the season of peace and goodwill to all men !

And we chatted, and smoked, and slept, and woke, and lo ! there was Christmas. Merry Christmas, Happy Christmas, Holy Christmas. Merry as one can keep it on meagre rations of horse-cutlet. Happy as one can be without news from friends for a hundred days (how many deaths may there not have been since !). Holy—bah ! it is too great a mockery to talk of holiness with the racket of the

mitrailleuse jarring on the ear. It is not easy to be Christianly this Christmas. I spent it at my temporary ingle-nook, fed recklessly with fuel for the occasion, and did try to make the day as festive as possible; but I fear it was a failure. How can one feel family-like in a strange city, or grow joyful on siege-diet? Those tales about the good fairies have not a shadow of foundation to rest on. I laid my slippers in the fireplace on Christmas Eve, and there was not even a yellow pat of rancid Flanders butter in them on Christmas morning. However, one can look on Christmas from a higher standpoint than the gastronomic, and I did manage to make it supportable by the aid of the Bible and Shakespeare, and saw visions in the fire before I turned in to go home in dreams.

Snow was on the ground on the morning of the 26th, so that our Christmastide was white; but the churchyards were as fat as if it were the green of the proverb that makes the sexton jovial. Victims struck down in the recent combat, and who had lingered on in pain, were being carried to these fat churchyards in batches. For instance, we com-



mitted to the soil to-day a colonel who had been wounded at Villiers, and a son of Commandant Roland of the Freeshooters of the Press. The latter had been a private in a regiment of the Line, and died with his face to the enemy.

"Deaths like that," said his father sternly over the newly made grave, "are not to be mourned, but to be avenged."

At the moment, the report of a cannon-shot resounded from the forts as if to ratify the stoic pledge, and he left for his position at the outposts. If all her defenders were like that man, Paris would not soon capitulate. But capitulate she must, and that soon, if help does not come. Not without significance are advertisements in the *Petites Affiches*, offering young rabbits in good condition for sale, or in exchange for ten hectolitres of coke. As if the ordinary afflictions of the time were inadequate, a friend warned me to be specially careful of what I wrote to the British public, as the *Gaulois* had denounced the correspondent of the *Daily News* inside Paris (Mr. Labouchere) as an English spy in the interests of Germany. My able colleague, I was

sure, could have written nothing to justify such a charge ; but Paris was in the spasms of an attack of nerves, and was really not in her right mind. Her rancour against England was unbridled. The “cordial ally” of the Crimea was a double-faced craven, and Paris prayed that she might soon have Russia down upon her. It is no good remonstrating with a bear whose head is sore, so when I heard Paris threatening vengeance on the “cordial ally” I held my tongue, and did not hint that it would be wise to take three hundred thousand Frenchmen out of pawn in Germany first. Lest the *Gaulois*, happening to come upon one of my letters, should mistranslate it and denounce me, too, as an emissary of those who were taking the iron out of my blood and the flesh off my bones, I deemed it prudent to draw up the appended—proclamation I shall call it, so as to be in the mode :

“It is admitted that one Frenchman can thrash five of any other nation.

“It is admitted that French is the only tongue in which poetry can be written, and that the language of Shakespeare is gibberish.

"It is admitted that the first Napoleon was the most amiable and inoffensive of human beings, and never bombarded an open town.

"It is admitted that the study of military topography is confined to French officers.

"It is admitted that French journalism is delicate and erudite, French commerce honest and enterprising, French hospitality free from ostentation, and French beauty in nowise indebted to bloom of roses and blanché of pearl.

"And, finally, it is admitted that Paris is Attica, and the rest of creation Bœotia."

*Liberavi animam*, and now they can shoot me if they so wish. But, those nervous spasms apart, Paris was not effeminate, and my sympathies were with her. And Germany, since the interview of Ferrières, and doubly so since the rejection of the armistice, to my thinking, was in the wrong. She played Might against Right. She was fighting, not to disperse an army or overthrow a dynasty, but to humiliate a nation. "It is excellent to have a giant's strength," my Shakespeare; but, as you added, "it is tyrannous to use it like a giant."

There was a report from Vinoy in the evening that three battalions of the National Guard had entered the park of the Maison-Blanche, with the object of knocking down the wall. Their skirmishers dislodged a battalion of Saxons after having *trop tiré*. Immature troops always blaze away foolishly. Some of these civic war-battalions were animated with an excellent spirit; of others the less said the kinder.

The 32nd, levied in Montmartre, effected a retrograde movement on the city gates the night of the panic at Ville-Evrard; but their commander laid the blame on five officers of the 112th of the Line, who ran towards him affrighted with the tale that their regiment had been annihilated, and that the Prussians were advancing *en masse*. Among the recent leaders appointed to the new Paris regiments were Ulrich de Fonvielle, who was not ready with his revolver when he called on Pierre Bonaparte; Louis Noir, a Zouave of the Crimea, and brother to Victor of that ilk, who was shot in the Auteuil tragedy; and Maurice Bixio, a nephew to Nino, one of the "Thousand of Marsala."

On the 27th, there was a reconnaissance towards Bas-Meudon by the 5th battalion of Mobiles of the Seine, and some prisoners were taken; this was a trifle (two killed, six wounded); but away at another quarter of the perimeter a grave potion was being brewed for the unlucky garrison.

The Germans were waking up. On this, the hundred and second day of the siege, they started from their passive attitude and inaugurated a vigorous bombardment of the forts and works to the east. A rough sketch of the positions assailed will be of use to the military student who has followed this chronicle. On a swell between the Canal de l'Oureq and the Marne lie, on an irregularly curved front, the forts Noisy, Rosny, and Nogent. The traveller by rail to Mulhouse passes them on his right, one after the other, in the order I have given. Noisy, the northernmost, is not quite two miles from the city ramparts, and is about a mile and a third from Rosny, with which it is connected by the redoubts of Montreuil and La Boissière, behind which runs a strategic road between the two forts. Rosny, the midmost fort, is two miles

and three-quarters from the enceinte, and not quite two from Nogent lower down, which is a little under three from Paris. The redoubt of Fontenay links Rosny to Nogent. All three forts are of the ordinary bastioned trace, and present four faces, that on the side nearest to the enemy being further protected by permanent covering works. Outside Rosny, at a distance of somewhat less than a mile, and commanded by its guns, is the plateau of Avron. This strong natural position was occupied by the French without firing a shot on the night from the 28th to the 29th of November, and was of immense utility in supporting the attempted sortie on the 30th, and all subsequent action on that line. For twenty-seven days the French had been there, which would lead one to suppose that the occupation was intended to be definitive like that of the plateau of Villejuif in the south; but, from the indifference with which the business of fortifying the place was regarded, it was to be presumed that Trochu meant only to turn it to temporary profit, or that he blindly believed that his artillery was so infinitely superior to the German that the

enemy dare not molest it. In either case, nothing had been done during those twenty-seven days to put Avron in a state of due defence; a few trenches were opened, and seventy-four guns were dragged up and mounted on the heights. These were mostly new breech-loading fourteen-pounders; but there were some batteries of position of twenty-four-pounders, and short forty-eight-pounders, and a comparatively few long forty-eight-pounders and ships' guns. Proper entrenchments were not dug, breastworks and cavaliers were neglected, neither shelter for the men not actually employed serving the pieces nor *réduits* for the battalions of support were looked after. In short, *the earth had hardly been stirred* — Todleben's golden rule had been despised. And yet Avron was a very important point; given the fitting equipment and direction, shells could be pitched from it into Chelles, the enemy's advances could be seriously incommoded, and the security of his communications compromised.

While the French were chuckling at the supposed listlessness of their opponents, the Germans suddenly

unmasked twelve formidable siege batteries: three at Raincy against Noisy; three at Gagny, below it, which played on Rosny; three at the bridge of Gournay, for service on Avron; and three at Noisy-le-Grand, for the special benefit of Nogent. They led off the attack at seven in the morning. Their fire was vehement and well sustained, and many of the young troops in the outer trenches, who had never been subjected to such an experience before, took to their heels. Ponderous masses of iron whizzed through the air, skimmed over their heads and across the forts behind at times, and at times ploughed up the soil beside them or sunk with a sullen thud deep into the earth. The oldest officers were astonished at the size of these projectiles, and their extraordinary power and velocity. The table-land of Avron was literally shaven by them; but their very dimensions militated against their destructiveness in instances, as they penetrated to such a depth that their larger splinters at bursting lodged in the ground, harmlessly displacing the clay. An observer of inquiring mind, who weighed one of these German Christmas-boxes, affirmed that it



turned the scale at 50 kilos—that is, over 110 lbs. avoirdupois. Another, who measured a cavity made in Rosny, declared that it was four feet and a half in diameter and a yard deep. Some of the shells were identified by the Engineer officers as having come out of the magazines at Metz! That was ungenerous indeed. The French artillery replied as well as it could to this infernal challenge; the Marines on the plateau stood to their pieces like bricks, and their mates in the forts, the brawny man-of-war gunners, stripped to their work. There was some pretty practice while light lasted; and the French infantry, astounded and alarmed at first, behaved passably, thanks to their officers, as they got used to the noise, and began to discover that “whistling Dick” is not such a very terrible fellow when one has the sense to keep a bright look-out and be ready for a drop on the face in the trenches. The losses, considering the exposed nature of the position and the number of troops that lay there, though sensible, could hardly be called great; there were not more than a dozen killed and eighty-four wounded. The force in occupation consisted of

some battalions of the National Guard and of the Mobiles, a battalion of Marine Infantry, the 112th of the Line, and the Independent Corps of Commandant Pothier. General d'Hugues, of Vinoy's corps, was in chief command; the gunners on Avron, who were drawn from the navy and army, and from the amateurs of the National Guard, were controlled by Colonel Stoffel, formerly military attaché at Berlin, and the Engineers—who were *not* worked to death—by Colonel Guillemot. Perhaps that was not his fault. Those Germans are such “artful dodgers,” and the employment of the Krupp cannon was a meanness on their part which nobody could have foreseen; for, there could be no doubt of it, the famous Krupp cannon it was that battered Avron. A fancy shell from one of these merciless monsters exploded in the midst of a group of officers of the 6th battalion of Mobiles of the Seine, killing four and wounding two others. Amongst the former was the Abbé Gros, chaplain. Three Marine and four Naval officers were wounded; a captain of the Corps-Franc and a sub-lieutenant of the 24th Regiment of Paris also came to grief. Thirty shells

fell on Rosny; one crashed through the outer wall of the barrack there and knocked over two men; three men were wounded in Nogent, none at Noisy. At five o'clock—that is, at nightfall—the firing ceased.

On the following morning the cannonade began anew, but not with such violence as before. The Prussians sent fewer messengers of death, but those they did send discharged their errand well and truly. They had corrected their range. General Trochu had ridden out on the plateau early, and visited the trenches, so that he had an opportunity of seeing with his own eyes that the vaunted artillery, hurriedly fashioned in the Paris foundries, over which every petty scribbler in the place had been crowing for weeks, was not “incontestably superior” to the splendid guns manufactured from Krupp’s unequalled steel. The forts did not suffer much during the day, though they were covered with an avalanche of big projectiles. The generality of those missiles were larger than, and as heavy as, half-hundredweights, but those that reached the forts mostly spent themselves on the talus. The

losses there, accordingly, were not serious, everybody being kept carefully out of harm's way under the casemates (there was not much difficulty in forcing them to stay there), except the sailors who manned the guns. Thus, in spite of the deadly hail launched by the Prussians, there was but one man killed in the forts; ten were wounded, and a few contused by falling blocks of masonry.

A French battery of field-guns at Bondy was brought to bear on the wood, and deranged the firing from Raincy to such an extent that Noisy was respected. One shell, however, that missed its mark, hopped on the strategic road between it and Rosny, and sprinkled the snow with the blood of a poor Mobile who happened to be walking there; another smashed through the wheels of a provision waggon and left it derelict on the highway. On the plateau of Avron the tale was different. Even as the Governor visited the trenches, encouraging the men and giving the necessary orders, amongst which was one to prepare cover for the troops, the Prussians multiplied their means of attack. "The plateau was furrowed by the fire of eight con-

verging batteries," admitted the official report. Some of the French batteries were sledged at in full breast from Chelles, enfiladed from Raincy and Gagny, and taken in the rear by the treacherous pieces at Noisy-le-Grand. Of course they could not hold their own, and Trochu soon saw it. The foot-soldiers in the trenches also suffered terribly; the soil was so caked by the frost that they could not move it with the pick, and shells falling on a resisting surface burst in four cases out of five. When they came on the parapets they cracked through, making a ring of seams like a star in a pane of glass. Sometimes, whether by hazard or by phenomenal pointing, the next shot went straight through. The position was not tenable. Rosny-sous-Bois, situated in a depression on the road from the fort of Rosny to Avron, where a body of the National Guard and the former Guard of Paris were held in reserve, was covered with projectiles. There were wounded men in the village and on the Mulhouse Railway, and the road outside was impracticable for conveyances. One of the splendid couch-waggons of the American Ambulance was rendered useless

by an inhuman shell. As evening came on the attack redoubled in fury, several of the French guns were dismounted, and the plateau became a very nest of bombs. "*Nos pièces, moins puissantes que les canons Krupp*" (official), had to give up the struggle, and the Governor found it his "imperious duty" to order the withdrawal of guns and men to the protection of the forts. The evacuation was effected under veil of the darkness, and with no worse accident than the upset of one of the heavy ship's guns into a quarry. At three o'clock in the morning of the 28th, the mitrailleuses of the Corps-Franc, which had remained behind to guard the retreat against a possible attack, descended the height, which was left to darkness and the dead. And there were people in Paris who pretended that the enforced abandonment of this commanding ridge overlooking the plain of St. Denis to the left, and the valley of the Marne from a steep eminence of nigh a hundred yards, was immaterial.

On the 29th, the bombardment was renewed more fiercely than ever, and missiles of colossal proportions were hurled against the three forts. It was a

marvel how cannons could stand the charge of powder that must have been employed to propel them. From eight to six o'clock fully *two thousand* projectiles were poured on Rosny. Some of the casemates, presumed to be bomb-proof, were stove in, and six of the volunteer gunners of the National Guard in one of them were put *hors de combat* by a single explosion. A hundred and fifty shells fell on the barrack in the left wing of the fort. Yet the losses in men were extremely small relatively to this enormous expenditure of metal. At Nogent there were fourteen wounded; at Rosny, three killed and nine wounded; and at Noisy only a few cases of contusions. On the 30th the bombardment continued. At the same time there were peculiar indications, which might have meant attack on the western side. It was felt that the strain could not last much longer. The town was growing restless, the clubs were agitating anew, and it was not at all impossible that Trochu might be forced into staking all on a single rash throw by the pressure of an unwise public opinion. On one of these days Castor and Pollux were sacrificed. Com-

panions in their lives, "in their death they were not divided." The first of them was brought down by an explosive ball by the gunsmith, Devisme; the second by two conical bullets from the trusty double-barrel of M. Edwards, the sporting son of Professor Milne-Edwards, of the Jardin des Plantes. Castor and Pollux were the pair of young elephants that delighted the little visitors to the Garden of Acclimatization. They went to ornament the hooks in the "*Boucherie Anglaise*." The capital sentence was passed on them not so much on account of the lack of meat as the dearth of forage. Could they not have been utilized for draught purposes, as in India? Elephants will not stand fire, but they are invaluable for moving heavy burdens in miry ground. A purchaser was wanted for the hippopotamus in the Jardin des Plantes, but the reserve price—eighty thousand francs—was prohibitive. Fancy an unfortunate gentleman, with a hearty appetite and a decayed set of molars, trying to fix his teeth into a square inch of the hide of a Nile horse! India-rubber steak, or a fillet of old boots, would be a dainty dish by comparison.



Stomach was beginning to insist on more attention being paid to his grumblings; and as permanent record that he did not grumble without cause, I went to the trouble of drawing up a comparison of the rates of some provisions in December, 1869, and in this month of misery :

				Average Price	
				In 1869.	In 1870.
				fr. c.	fr. c.
Potatoes (the 20 pints)	...	...	...	1 0	20 0
Celery (the stick)	...	...	...	0 25	1 75
Beetroot (the kilo)	...	...	...	0 20	1 20
Olive-oil (the kilo)	...	...	...	4 0	10 0
Milk (the pint) ...	...	...	...	0 30	2 0
Fresh butter (the kilo)	...	...	...	6 0	70 0
Fresh eggs (each)	...	...	...	0 15	2 0
Beef-suet (the kilo)	...	...	...	1 30	4 0
Horse-suet (the kilo)	...	...	...	1 0	6 0
Rabbits (each) ...	...	...	...	3 0	30 0
Pigeons (each) ...	...	...	...	1 50	35 0
Chickens (each)...	...	...	...	6 0	55 0
Geese (each) ...	...	...	...	7 0	80 0
Turkeys (each) ...	...	...	...	10 0	90 0

I could not understand why horse-suet rated higher than beef-suet, and I did not at all relish the idea of pigeons having been offered for sale. I suppose I was becoming febrile in my sentimentality. Many articles of daily consumption in ordinary house-

holds do not figure in this list. They were not to be had. In compensation, we had such culinary eccentricities as roast kangaroo, when we chose to dip into the purse and the purse was long enough. Mental pabulum left nothing to be desired—in quantity. No less than fifty-seven journals had been started since the revolution of the 4th of September, viz.: fourteen in the first month, thirteen in October, fifteen in November, and five in December. Paper was getting scarce; but we were not driven back upon Turkey carpet, the original material. How whimsical were the titles of some of these periodicals! The *Wounded Lion* was cried beside *Free Europe*; the *Greek Fire* shone emulous to the *Eye of Marat*; the *Armed Sentinel* stood by the *Rampart*, and the *Red Flag* over the *Populace*; the *Vanguard* was rival to the *Moblot*, and the *Balloon Post* soared commercially over the *Country in Danger*. Five-and-twenty of these prints died of infant inanition. On the 30th, Sir Swelling Beardley, to whom allusion has been made already, appeared before the Tribunal of Correctional Police on the triple charge of having worn

decorations and usurped titles to which he had no right, and of having swindled sundry tradesmen. The gallant baronet would seem to have been harshly treated; he had entered Franchetti's squadron of Scouts, but had to send in his resignation; when he got out of the stirrups he made himself captain of foot in the Legion of "*Amis de la France*," but the Count d'Estampes, the commandant, objected to that easy style of promotion; and finally he took in hand the formation of a corps of Estafettes, and had a showy uniform of colonel designed and made for himself. The Court generously enlarged him, deciding that he was cracked in the head, but that there was no flaw in his honour. Shameful, all the same, that a hero who had daring adventures enough in his career to rival those of the Three Musketeers should have been obliged to eat his Christmas dinner in durance. He had disappeared for three days from Franchetti's headquarters. At his return he accounted for the absence of his horse by the story that its head had been carried off by a cannon-ball, while he was out on a reconnaissance on his own account. Sir

Swelling Beardley's admiration for the truth, like that of a vain lady's-maid for a diamond bracelet in Harry Emmanuel's, must be heightened by the sorrowful conviction that it will never adorn him.

Touching these free corps, quite too many of them had been formed. There were, probably, over 15,000 men in their ranks, and of these fully 10,000 legally belonged to the Line, the Mobile, or the war-battalions of the National Guard. Some of them, it is true, had their *raison d'être*: for instance, the battery of the Polytechnic School recruited from former pupils of that institution; the Volunteer Engineers, Auxiliary Sappers, Mitrailleuse Corps, and Volunteer Artillery of the bastions of the enceinte, all of which were called for by the Government; "*les Amis de la France*," exclusively composed of foreigners; and the various troops of horse (Franchetti's, Pindray's, Fould's, and the Cavaliers of the Republic), which did reconnoitring service as irregulars; but the multitude of companies of Freeshooters—except those from the environs, whose local knowledge might be useful—were an embarrassment to discipline rather than anything else.

At such an exerueiating crisis, when every syllable that fell from the Government was watched for and weighed by the beleaguered city with the same anxiety that a son scans the face of the doctor by his dying mother's bedside, what a mockery was that dreary, blundering, and stupidly written *Official Journal*! In the number for Friday, December 30th, three columns in bold type, nearly a fourth of the entire impression, were taken up with a prolix review by M. P. Joigneaux of the Annual Report of the Agricultural Society of France. Incredible this, when the husbandman should only ply his spade at digging earthworks to defend himself from the invaders, or digging graves wherein to bury them! The mother is in her death-agony, and the doctor begins to lecture the son on the most eligible method of cultivating his geraniums!

As the year waned, the dissatisfaction at the inertia of Trochu strengthened and spread. Several papers spoke of the advisability of his deposition. Rumours, the most improbable, were circulated and credited as to what was going on in the provinces, from which the Government had had no message for

sixteen days. The weather was too cold for the pigeons to travel. A story that one of the armies of succour was at Creil flew over the town like wildfire, and the conclusion was forthwith arrived at that the Germans had bombarded the forts to prevent the Parisians from rendering assistance to their brothers. Then it was related that a bottle containing news that Prince Frederick Charles had been killed, had been carried down the Marne from Meaux. That, likewise, was believed, the gossips never stopping to reflect that the river was frozen. The readiness to accept these rumours betrayed the disquietude of the city, and its unpreparedness to receive evil tidings should they come. The troops were jaded and despondent. It should be recollected there were a number of boys in the ranks, who had not the strength of constitution to rally against the trials to which they had been exposed at the outset of their military life. One hopeful line from Chanzy or Bourbaki and all this would have changed. To say that the safety of France might depend on the flight of a pigeon!

The last day of 1870 came, and we understood

that a council of war was to aid the Governor in the decisions he takes. Generals Ducrot and Vinoy ; Le Flô, the War Minister ; Schmitz, chief of the staff ; Guoid, of the artillery ; Chabaud-Latour, of the engineers ; and the admirals and other commandants of the different *secteurs*, were to compose it, with the venerable General Tripier, who merits more than a passing mention. Tripier was the Todleben of invested Paris. Seventy years of age, but clear of head and robust of body, full of experience and no slave to routine, he had really done much in a quiet way to defend the city. He it was who, with experiences of Sebastopol, recommended earthworks to be constructed from the beginning, called the services of the civil engineers into demand, and advised that the mattock should be used and the besiegers besieged in their turn. This council was said to have been imposed upon Trochu, but many felt that he must have been glad to have others associated with him in his dread responsibility. When the capitulation came (and it was inevitable, bar miracles), the charge of treason would be sure to be made against him by some of those bombastic

civilians, who would fain blow away the Germans with the breath of their eloquence. It was almost a pity that they were not put on the council themselves, for this charge of treason was one that could be conveniently distributed.

The Old Year was drawing to its dismal finish—year opened with frivolities and follies, and closed with griefs multiplied and multiplying. What emotions it gave birth to, what changes it developed ! Of a verity, a twelvemonth of vicissitude, startling and stunning : the accession of the Ollivier Ministry to power ; the tragedy of which Noir was the victim ; the appeal to arms, arrest and trial of Rochefort ; the mad revolutionary attempt of Flourens in the Faubourg du Temple ; the plot to assassinate Napoleon III. ; the plebiscitum of the 8th of May ; the declaration of war on the 19th of July ; the wild cries “ To Berlin ” in Paris streets. And the litany of dolours not yet ended—the surprise of Wissemburg ; the defeats of Woerth, Forbach, and Gravelotte ; the culminating disaster of Sedan ; the proclamation of the Republic by bloodless *coup d'état* ; the investment of the capital ;



the fall of Strasburg and Metz; the baffled uprising of the Commune; Villiers; and now the bombardment. One could not sing to the year that's awa' this night, though there was a verse of the Scottish stave that sadly fitted :

“ Here's to the soldier that bled,  
And the sailor that bravely did fa' ;  
Their fame is alive, though their spirits have fled  
On the wings of the year that's awa'.”

For chorus, the echoes of a booming gun come flapping on the frosty midnight and buffeting about the gables, to die away in the pitchy shadows of lone, cold, melancholy streets.

## CHAPTER VI.

An Unhappy New Year—On Duty—A Forlorn Boulevard—O'Donovan and the Writer feel Virtuous—Philosophy of Marriage—A Melodramatic Pair of Generals—A Live New Year's Gift—Those who Profited by the Siege—Spread of Sickness—Battering of the South Forts—German Shells inside the Ramparts—A Dead-set on Vanves—An Abortive Communistic Rising—What Delescluze Demanded.

ON the bitter first of January, 1871, I was on duty outside a butcher's shop at the top of the Rue d'Amsterdam, as well as I can recollect. I had four blue-nosed men under my command, and it was my business to see that those provided with tickets got their due rations of horse-meat, and in proper order. I trust I did my duty without fear or favouritism. There were no complaints, and as soon as everybody was served, the butcher's wife beckoned me into a back parlour. She complimented me on the quiet

and quick way in which the distribution had been effected, and said I was the first man who had been there who had gone through his work impartially, without making speeches or asking her husband to give him something for himself.

“Would I take a glass of curaçoa?”

Of course I would, two glasses of curaçoa—the morning was one of hard frost, when the breath streamed out like smoke, and cannon-booms rolled towards us in muffled beat like the ticks of some devil's great pendulum. I pledged her in the unctuous Dutch liquor, and wished her all the favours the season should give (but which were denied) in duplicate some day. She asked me from what part of France I came. When I answered that I was Irish, she threw herself into my arms—in presence of her husband always—and said she was an accidental countrywoman of mine. She was the daughter of a sergeant-major of cavalry, and had been born in Cahir Barracks, in my own county. When I left I had a liberal hunk of currant-cake in my pocket, the which, at O'Donovan's suggestion, I gave to Madame Wilma. It was but her just

right, for I used to eat her allowance of charger. During my turn of service at that butcher's shop—about two and a half hours—twenty-seven funerals passed towards the cemetery of Montmartre. How gay the *Jour de l'An* used to be! It was the high-day of Paris in its frolic mood. The line of boulevards was like a fair-green, buoyant and bustling. Brightly decked booths were ranged along the footways for the sale of toys, lollipops, and ingenious nicknacks. There were Agra marvels of candied architecture in the windows of Siraudin, Boissier, and the masters of the confectioner's craft. Bébé was in ecstasies, and blew off his superfluous steam of exuberance in the trumpet he got for New Year's gift from uncle; rocking-horses curvetted as if they knew there was a price on their wooden heads; happy greetings and cordial hand-grasps were exchanged—even poor relations were gratified with a friendly nod; the concierge unbended to the lodger in the attic, admitting him to social equality; and the postman staggered under the load of visiting-cards, which flew about like perfumed valentines in England on the 14th of February. There were

visits to-day, but few interchanges of presents. Beetroots were more in request than bouquets ; a cut of mule would be more acceptable than a mechanical singing-bird. O'Donovan, who came over early, told me that the horse-dietary was developing scorbutic disease in his quarter, and that the mortality amongst the newly born, weakly females, and the aged was simply awful. We went for a walk on the Grand Boulevard : there were some booths, attended by men in uniform, but the pretence of animation was lugubrious. A Cheap John detailed the merits of a magic razor-sharpener ; a photographer offered to take the likenesses of soldiers at half-price ; there were hideous images of mannikin Prussians, "*recommandés aux chassepots Français* ; and among the principal articles of merchandise were gaiters, canteens, pocket-pistols, mixtures for brightening brass, metal numbers, casques of boiled leather guaranteed to be the original *pickelhaube*, and unexploded conical shot. Beside a giantess, born at Strasburg (all the bearded women and wild men of the woods were now natives of the Rhine province), was exhibited a

panoramic view of heroic Châteaudun. We got back to the Rue de Clichy as soon as we could, and set to manufacturing the prospectus of a satirical paper, one copy of which we actually brought out for private circulation. Just as we had finished a parody of a letter from Victor Hugo, a jingling of spurs and sabre in the hall attracted our notice, and we caught sight of an apparition, all lace and furs and boots, stalking across the courtyard. It was an officer of the staff from St. Denis, who had been to present his *bonne amie* on one of the upper storeys with her *étrennes*; so the concierge told us. There was a delicious pervading odour of roast flesh and a juicy simmer on the staircase shortly after. It was too tantalizing; we rushed out and across the street to Prassophagus, played billiards savagely, and talked righteous indignation. We felt so virtuous. There was little marrying or giving in marriage at the time: Paris was a model of continence. *Sine Baccho et Cerere*, the Cytherean goddess lacks worshippers. If we were frigid, we deserved no praise for it. One strapping fellow of twenty-seven (I withhold his

name) did marry a lady who had doubled the Cape of forty; and when I hinted that she must have had potatoes in the cellar or some other hidden charm, O'Donovan rebuked me, and held that it was pure love on both sides. The widow Thrale was not in her first childhood when she married the young Italian music-master, Piozzi; Elizabeth was thirty-eight when she "popped the question" to a French prince just nineteen years old, as the song goes in the burlesque of "Aladdin," and she was sixty-one when she fell in love with Essex, who was sweet seventeen; the Princess de Retz, as Saint Simon relates, was a beldame of seventy-four when she led to the altar a boy-bridegroom of sixteen. True, true, friend O'D.; but the love in these cases was all on one side; I still cling to my cellar-of-potatoes theory.

The day could not pass without a decree; this declared that the National Guard were at last to be associated with the Mobiles and the army in active operations. A number of the chiefs of the civic force paid the ceremonial visit to Clément Thomas at his headquarters on the Place Vendôme. "Let us

shake hands," he said, "for many of us are destined never to meet again"—a proceeding more melodramatic than manly. Trochu also called on him, and I was informed that he, too, indulged in melodrama. "General!" he cried, extending his right arm, "this hand will wither sooner than sign the surrender of Paris!"

We treated ourselves to a bottle of generous wine at dinner, in lingering compliment to the maimed festival, and under its influence forgot our cares. Wine, as Oliver Wendell Holmes maintains, is the grand specific against dull dinners; it is the grand equalizer and fraternizer which works up the radiators to their maximum radiation, and the absorbents to their maximum receptivity. I proposed O'D.'s health in a neat and appropriate speech, and he proposed mine, and we both drank to Madame Wilma; and then I took down "The Professor at the Breakfast-Table" from the shelf, and we read alternately "The Story of Iris"—that delicately polished gem of the man whom I consider to be the foremost of American humourists. And we drained the last drop of the Burgundy to the genial



sempervirent Sage of Harvard. Before retiring to rest, I happened on the "Letters of Madame de Sévigné," and opened the volume at her account of New Year's Day, 1674, at Paris, with its gossip anent Turenne, Colbert and John Sobieski. How time has cropped the roses ! Madame de Rochefort was made one of five dames of honour this day one hundred and ninety-six years ago ; and Henri de Rochefort——But to bed, to bed ! There's knocking at the gate—loud, fell and persistent—the knocking of artillery.

We had a Government note on the 2nd, admitting that there had been no news from the provinces since December 14th, but arguing that no news was good news, and poetically enlarging on the breath of hope which rose over the walls of Paris, penetrated all hearts (query in the clouds ?), and gave birth to a vague but firm intuition of success. Rankest of rodomontade !

The city could not be taken "*de vive force*." That was positive ; but the invaders had a sure ally in famine. There were over two million souls within the enceinte, exclusive of the army, sailors,

and Mobiles. It was no light task to supply them with food. Six hundred and fifty horses had to be slaughtered daily to provide even the parsimonious ration of meat; eighty omnibuses had stopped running, but there were many good steeds on their legs still. The *Compagnie des Petites Voitures* had 2,900 in its stables. And there were fifty thousand dogs, which the Chinese aver to be succulent eating. If we were driven to it, there was one-fortieth of a dog for each inhabitant. The greatest privation was that of fuel. Picture-frames were sold for firing, the trees and palisadings on the exterior boulevards were no longer respected, and a building-yard in the Rue de la Roquette was broken into and pillaged. The twenty Mayors, who should have looked after wants of this kind, let the perished population sulk, and busied themselves—with military criticisms.

A brilliant little feat of arms was accomplished on the morning of the 3rd, by a band of the *Eclaireurs* of the Seine camped at the outposts near Groslay. General Ducrot happened to visit their lines on the previous night, and remarked to their

commandant, M. Poulizac, that the Government was very badly off for news, and that a few prisoners who might have newspapers in their pockets would be an acceptable New Year's gift.

"How many do you want?" said the commandant.

"As you please," said the General, who evidently knew his man.

Accordingly, before dawn, Poulizac and fifty picked followers made a rush on a milesman's house by the Soissons Railway, opposite Bourget, which the Prussians occupied as an advanced post. So little was the spirited dash expected that the gallant fellows got to within ten yards of the enemy before a shot was fired. On they rushed, the sentinel was choked off with a bayonet-thrust, the door was forced open with musket-butts, and a terrible *mêlée* ensued in the body of the building. But the Prussians were surprised this time; several of them were killed, others escaped by the windows, and six laid down their arms. In less than two hours from the moment of starting, Commandant Poulizac returned to his quarters with

his half-dozen captives, having kept his promise to General Ducrot, without the loss of a single life. Three of his men were wounded; amongst them Lieutenant Rueil, who belonged to a family of soldiers. One brother, an officer, was wounded at Sedan; another was a volunteer in the Line; a third, a sergeant-fourrier in the Eclaireurs, was the first to burst into the Prussian post.

The enemy was busy with the bombardment of the eastern forts, making a particular target of Nogent, but did trifling damage. In the compass of a day six hundred shells were pitched on the work, and yet there was but one man slightly wounded.

On the 4th, the Government issued a proclamation relieving lodgers from the quarter's rent due on the 15th inst., where they could show—as all were sure to—that they were embarrassed by the crisis. This was a benevolent measure at the expense of the landlords; but what were they to do? In some instances, they were solely dependent on their income from house property. A credit of twenty millions of francs was opened on the budget of 1871, to meet the expenses necessitated by the

embodiment of the National Guard. Would not a small credit in favour of the distressed landlords have been generous on the part of the provisional rulers of Paris? At least, my concierge thought so. But there are a great many things the Government could do that it fails to do. New brooms do not always sweep clean. For example, it could strip naked and put out for a night on the plateau of Avron that cursed Auvergnat who is supposed to supply me with wood, but has shut up his shanty, and vows he has no more when he sees a notice from the Mayor forbidding him to demand more than eight francs for the 100 kilos—only 50 per cent. profit; it could whip with nettles the silver-tongued, stingy wife of my wine merchant, who mulcts me two sous the litre extra for weak dinner-claret because I am a foreigner; it could gibbet the grocer, who charges a couple of francs for a bunch of mouldy raisins that might be thrown to the street-boys without danger of being picked up in ordinary times; it could guillotine some hundreds of whining wretches with gold in the lining of their waistcoats, who slink about charitable

institutions begging tickets for soup, as if they intended making a collection of them, while genuine poverty—the poverty of people who are too self-respecting to beg, and can get no work—crouches shivering in poor rooms, and vegetates in sickly hope that the end will soon come. And the end does come for many—not the end they yearned for, but another; they reach a haven of refuge, but it is through the portals of death. The rates of mortality were, indeed, fearfully augmenting. In the week ending the 25th of December there were 2,728 deaths; in the last, 3,280, being an increase of *five hundred and forty-two* within seven days. Diseases of the throat and chest went up to the figure of 459 as the glass went down; typhoid fever counted 250 victims, the natural result of bad food and foolish recourse to stimulants; and small-pox carried off 454, the maximum since the plague set in. This appalling mortality was to be attributed to the vitiated air breathed by the refugee peasantry, who packed themselves like herrings, for the sake of economy and warmth, and neglected the commonest sanitary precautions.

Meanwhile, the big guns of the besiegers pegged away lustily from dawn to dark with such results as these: at Nogent, yesterday, one man slightly wounded; at Rosny, three men contused by splinters. There was a death on the French side certainly, but it was that of a Marine shot by his comrades after a drum-head trial for attempting to pass over to the enemy. The young soldiers were picking up the knack of dodging the projectiles. The most intelligent and quick-sighted of the Mobiles in the forts were told off to watch the German batteries. As soon as they descried the warning flash, they shouted "*Gare la bombe!*" and all hands ran to cover. When the projectile exploded, the task of repairing dilapidations was set to with a will, until another visitor came screaming along. The sailors, who manned the replying ordnance, took it coolly; they even converted the bombardment into means of amusement, hollowing out enormous craters, which they numbered like nine-holes, and laying bets as to which the Prussian messengers were likely to bowl into. On the 5th, the siege entered on a new phase. In the morning,

a violent cannonade from the south was opened on the forts of Montrouge, Vanves, and Issy. The positions of the enemy's batteries were much nearer than those on the east. It was now beyond a doubt that he could hammer down the houses in several districts on the Left Bank whenever he chose. At L'Hay his cannon pointed their muzzles on the Pantheon at a distance of considerably less than five miles, and on the plateau of Châtillon they could reach the enceinte with ease, and take the gilt dome of the Invalides as a point of aim at a range of about 8,000 yards. Whether intentionally or by a well-intended miscalculation, between thirty and forty shells fell in the Latin Quarter. A couple buried themselves in the Cemetery of Mont Parnasse, after ripping through the cypresses that line the quiet avenues; another few dropped into the middle of the market-place of Montrouge. The ancient Botanic Garden of the Medical School in the Park of the Luxembourg, the Rue des Feuillantines beside the military hospital of the Val de Grâce, and the Rue Gay-Lussac, on a line with the Pantheon, were gratified with sundry shots in their



turn. Some roofs were smashed in, a little alarm created, but no more. Only one person was injured. No fires were occasioned, and even if they had been, due precautions had been long since taken, five of Merryweather's and two of Shand's steam-engines from London having been brought over in view of contingencies of the kind. A missile crashed through the windows of a washerwoman's room in the *Chaussée du Maine*, and burst on her bed; the woman had just gone out for water, and three of her ironers, who had been working in a room adjacent, had left it a few minutes before to see a splinter of a shell a boy was selling in the street. The shutters were put up on many shops in the dangerous neighbourhood, and some persons removed their furniture.

There was a welcome change in the temperature, which rose from eleven degrees below zero (Centigrade) to something which, though cold, was mild and endurable by comparison. A slight fall of snow on the hard soil gave it a cleanly mantle. Now that the real attack on Paris had begun, the bearing of the population was steady. There was

no audible hint of surrender, even from the women. A few shells were sent from Montretout on the railway bridge over the Seine at Point du Jour, with the evident object of damaging the gun-boats moored there, but without effect. One shattered the trellis-work fronting the river-side public-house by the steamboat wharf, and the others plunged into the stream, raising a foamy splash, but doing no harm, except, perhaps, to the fishes. Some of those shells were monstrous, eight inches in diameter, and over a foot and a half in height, of a sugar-loaf shape, and weighed 110 kilos—that is to say, sixteen stones. The forts on the east were bombarded simultaneously, and the redoubts of the Hautes-Bruyères and the Moulin-Saquet. The forts, out-works, and one bastion of the enceinte responded vigorously. Losses: nine killed (one captain) and forty wounded, including four officers. A successful reconnaissance was made during the night on the plateau of Avron, and an attack on Bondy repulsed. The enemy left fifteen corpses behind him there.

Vanves had nine pieces dismounted by the fire from the German batteries on Châtillon which

dominated it. There were no sand-bags or sacks of earth in the fort to repair breaches; and at the very moment they were wanted an order appeared, prescribing a vexatious process of routine to be gone through before they could be obtained. Despising the charge of irregularity, forty volunteers from the National Guard, led by a naval officer, escorted to the fort at midnight a convoy of carts laden with the coveted earth-sacks. The horses stumbled frequently on the slippery road, or shied at the glare of shells, and the men had to put their shoulders to the wheel and force the vehicles on. They got to Vanves in time to help the commander to make good a damaged casemate, having sustained but two casualties on the way.

On the 6th, a thaw set in; the bombardment was continued, but with less violence. Some shells fell near the Invalides; one smashed through the roof of the house of a commissary of police in the Rue d'Assas, in the Faubourg St. Germain. The Government congratulated the people on their behaviour, and encouraged them to prove themselves worthy of the Army of the Loire, which had forced back

the enemy, and the Army of the North, which was marching to their relief. Trochu issued a short address at six p.m., warning the Parisians not to be misled by calumnies against their leaders, and promising that *he would not capitulate*. An attempt at a promenade by the Communists was a miserable failure. As darkness, thickened with fog, enveloped the city—resolute and orderly—the firing was prosecuted with energy, and shells came bouncing truculently on the left of the Seine.

The *Official Journal* of the 7th let loyal Parisians into the knowledge that they had escaped a worse and nearer danger than Prussian shells, that of another uprising of the scum of the populace. A red placard inciting to civil war had been posted on the walls, but was torn down and trampled under foot by the well-disposed wherever they saw it. The Government organ informed us that the authors of this last plot had been arrested, and would be tried by court-martial, but did not say who they were. If Trochu had proper firmness he would rely on the sane and solid majority at his back, and pack off these disturbers to the forts ; but he was

longanimous to a fault. If the majority were wrong, at all events better the tyranny of a majority than that of a minority. The incendiary placards were headed "Appeal to the People of Paris." They were secretly stuck up—during the darkness that beseebeth evil deeds—and were carried round to various newspaper-offices by a man in the uniform of an officer in the National Guard. They were signed "The Delegates of the Twenty Arrondissements," but said delegates modestly withheld their baptismal appellations. In the judgment of these discreet unknown, there should be an immediate dissolution of all authority. The Commune was the one remedy; like the quack's bread-pills, it was warranted to cure everything. In response to this invocation to turbulence, a rabble of some six hundred fellows met on the Place of the Château d'Eau, and made a promenade in a few outer districts amid the indifference or derision of the onlookers. A second but more moderate address had been issued by another sect of partisans of the infallible Commune. This purported to emanate from the Mayors and Adjoints of

all Paris, but was the production of M. Delescluze of the *Réveil* (Ledru Rollin's henchman), Mayor of the 19th arrondissement. A meeting in favour of its objects was held in the 2nd arrondissement, the Mayor of which was a violent Republican, and it was formally laid before Jules Favre on Thursday night, on the occasion of an interview with the municipality at the Ministry of the Interior. But the greater part of the Mayors did not approve of it, and were satisfied with the expression of a desire for more energetic action. The demands of Delescluze were a jumble of the good and the bad, underlain by an ill-dissembled hostility to the existing power, whose "lamentable negligence" was rebuked, and this by the very men whose lamentable neglect of their own true functions was notorious. Here was the pith of the document: Dismissal of Generals Trochu, Clément Thomas, and Le Flô; renewal of war-committees and the infusion of younger blood into the staff; the trial by court-martial of such generals and officers as preached discouragement in the army; the successive mobilization of the National Guard of Paris, and the

institution of a supreme council of defence where the civil element would not be subordinate to the military. This last was a preposterous proposition, and gives correct gauge of the asininity of these high-pressure patriots. With a touch of unconscious humour, Delescluze closed his summons to commotion by asking the people—oh, that unfortunate, much-enduring people!—to support him, but not by violent manifestations. This undeniable appeal to disunion ended by a request for a shout of acclamation for the Republic, one and *indivisible*. The whole act was that of an idiot who sounds a tocsin and says he is but tinkling a lullaby.

While these trading agitators were allocuting and demonstrating, the Germans were cannonading. They never swerved from their straightforward object. The redoubt of St. Maur and the buildings near the battle-ground of Champigny were their butts of predilection now. The attack on Nogent and Rosny had slackened; Noisy was strenuously thundering on the trenches of Bondy, having started with three veritable broadsides. There was a popping of rifles at Courneuve in the morning, and

the heavy batteries on the south front hurled their missiles on Issy, Vanves, and Montrouge. Four men were killed, and thus, by degrees, day by day, the crimson roll was mounting. The happy were killed outright; others perished slowly in hospital. Rueil of Poulizac's Eclaireurs died, for instance, on his pallet, and was buried to-day. Shells, which know no distinction, have been tumbling about the sixth and seventh *secteurs*, and slaughtering civilians. This may have been chance, but it was remarkably like wilful bombardment.\* To bombard without due notice thereof is a contravention of the laws of war.

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\* That it was wilful became subsequently incontestable. In Niemann's "History of the Campaign" (an authorized book) it is boasted that the Germans "had gained the advantage of being able to bombard the city itself from the 8th of January." He complains of the want of effect of this measure, although "a tolerable number of persons were no doubt killed and wounded."



## CHAPTER VII.

The Bombardment of Paris—Massacre of Women and Children—Cries of “Treachery”—Judas Schmitz—The Flight from the Left Bank—A Blundering Sortie—Trochu loses Temper—A Mischievous Print—Personal Sufferings—Looking for a Loaf—Arrest of the Writer—His Mortifying March and Triumphant Release—Terrible Scenes in the Quarter of the Schools—A Blot on the German Escutcheon—Favre invited to England—Bumbledom in Bullion—The Writer warned by the *Gaulois*—Another Turn of the Screw—Prepare for Action.

ON the night of Sunday, the 8th of January, the *Fête des Rois*, it became plain to Paris that the enemy's bombardment was wilful. It will be interesting to supply a few details as to the damage, which had already been caused within the girdle of fortifications. The first shell, as well as could be ascertained, fell on the 5th in the Rue Lalande, and, bursting in the street, scattered the fragments of a

window at No. 7 over an infant in its cradle. Three others followed suit quickly, taking a direction as if the clock-tower of the municipality of the 14th arrondissement were aimed at, but did no hurt beyond the rending of a few walls and the pulverization of sundry panes of glass. They were greeted with cries of "*Vive la France, vive Paris!*" Four shells fell on the Normal School in the Rue d'Ulm, one of these lobbing into the ambulance of the institution. The turf of the Luxembourg Garden was furrowed by a couple of "whistling Dicks;" a passer-by was seriously wounded by a splinter in the Boulevard d'Enfer; while in the Rue Daguerre adjacent three, succeeding each other in rapid whirl, completely riddled an unlucky house and sent its inmates helter-skelter in scared amazement. It was pitiable to see pale women hurrying with the remnants of their furniture to seek safety with the neighbours. One of those bombs exploded in a room, killing a dog that lay on a sick child's bed; the innocent that was fondling it providentially escaped. The Bullier ball-room had been converted into an ambulance. Shells danced into that once-lively haunt of

madcap youth, and made a devil's galop round the beds on the night of the 6th; such of the wounded as could move huddled from under the blankets and hobbled out in quest of asylum. The Ney statue in front was cinctured at one time with a sulphurous vapour that would have been less pleasing to the sculptor than to the grim warrior who faced his last volley, that of his executioners, on the identical spot. A shell penetrated into a house in the Rue de l'Arbalète, tenanted by the gardener of the School of Pharmacy, and burst near a stove beside which his wife and his little girl were sitting with him. The gardener's cheek was laid open with a strip of lead, his wife was wounded in several places, and their daughter was killed instantaneously. A group of men were drinking at the counter of a wine-shop in the Rue d'Enter, when the splinters of a shell, crashing on the pavement outside, struck several of them, one—who had come in for safety the day before from Châtillon—mortally. This unfortunate left a widow in her nineteenth year and two babies.

On the night of the 7th, the fire recommenced

with new energy from the batteries of Châtillon on the Pantheon, and from the batteries of Meudon on Grenelle. At one period, as many as one hundred and thirty shots could be counted by the hour. This thing had now continued for three nights, damage had been done to an immensity of property, and thirty-five persons had been struck, many of them fatally. Among the eleven victims were *four* women.

At last, tidings came from the provinces. On the 9th, a pigeon winged its way in with a message, dated the 4th, recounting Faidherbe's victory at Bapaume.\* That pigeon had nigh been brought down as a piece of feathered pot-luck by a sporting wine-merchant. Paris, easily elevated to the seventh heaven of high spirits by a syllable of good cheer, rejoiced over this small success, the while it unloosed blistering floods of hot fury on the Germans for their outrage on defenceless citizens. On the 10th, the

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\* This was a questionable victory. Faidherbe took the villages to the north of Bapaume, but his attack on the main position was repulsed. True, Von Göben had given the order to evacuate Bapaume, but the French were in retreat upon Arras. Let us call it a drawn battle.

bombarding batteries pelted away with vicious vigour, still on the Quarter of the Schools. When darkness fell, the storm of shells in and around the Pantheon was infernal. From a wounded Saxon the avowal was elicited that the German gunners made the sacred building a *point de mire*, because they had reason to believe a large quantity of gunpowder was stored in the crypt. Yet, for all the horrifying noise of this bombardment, the device was less effective than it usually is. Bombardment is very much of a bogey. Familiarity with it breeds unconcern. And Paris was too spacious to be bombarded. The fort of Issy, which had been the object of the most violent attack, had suffered most; the results on the positions of Créteil, Moulin-Saquet, and Hautes-Bruyères were insignificant.

A vile, cowardly, slanderous whisper was being actively circulated that General Schmitz had sold the pass to the Prussians! This pernicious invention had its origin in a most injudicious statement in the *Opinion Nationale*, that a sortie, intended for the 9th, had to be countermanded at the last minute, the enemy having made preparations

to meet it on the very points where it was to be attempted. The editor, without offering or even seeking proof of his assertion, asked what general had betrayed the movement. There were only four in the secret. The *Siècle* took up the parable next morning, adding that these four generals were Trochu, Ducrot, Vinoy, and Schmitz, and insisting on a court of inquiry to unmask the traitor. This was more than sufficient to set idle tongues wagging, and at it they went with such a vim that before night it was plain as a pikestaff that "we" had been sold, Schmitz was the Judas, the corps of staff-officers was rotten; even the rank and file had suffered by the contamination, and Sergeant Hoff, who was decorated for his exploits, was no better than a charlatan of heroism! Was it not notorious that he always brought back Prussian helmets from his expeditions, never a Prussian corpse? And did not a writer in the *Paris Journal* know a lady, who had got seven thousand francs pocket-money from the sergeant in three months? A perfect lady—importunate as the daughter of a horse-leech! Whether should that writer be congratulated on his

perspicacity of judgment or on his selection of female acquaintances? And Trochu did not send these omniscient editors and writers to cram gabions at the foreposts; did not gag them; did not even sentence them to a shower-bath. Longanimous to a fault—he was more, he was longanimous to a crime! Heyday! Paris was never at a loss for gobemouches, now less than ever. There were sceptics, too. I overheard a confab of workmen at the Porte St. Martin, who settled it to their own satisfaction that not a single shell had tumbled in the Latin Quarter. It was all lies of the papers! As they were speaking, refugees from the Left Bank were crowding into the vacant lodgings of the safer side, and souvenirs of the bombardment were on sale at Devisme's shop on the Boulevard des Italiens. An immense cylindrical projectile that did not explode was to be seen in a shawl warehouse next door but one, ticketed "Novelty for Ladies—Prussian Fashions." Unkindly New Year's offerings; but why repine? Has not Gambetta had the thoughtfulness to transmit by carrier-pigeon the speech he made at Bordeaux on the 1st of January?

The truth about that sortie of the 9th lay in a nutshell. It was not a sortie, but a reconnaissance, and was actually made upon the Moulin de Pierre at Clamart, where the enemy was suspected to be building a battery. The engineer officer, who was told off to destroy the German works, set out on the march with his party as the reconnoitring troops, two companies of Marines, returned. The "jollies" had done their share of the duty: they had carried a position, captured twenty Bavarians, and unscreened the emplacement of a sunken battery covered with fascines; but as they had no tools, and were without distinct orders, they fell back as they noticed the enemy massing. This disorganization was a part of the system which left the guns in the forts without blindages, and the fortifications without embrasures for the augmented armament, ordered at the opening of the siege.

The Schmitz scandal made headway. On the 12th, half Paris woke under the impression that the untiring old sub-editor of bulletins, who was a Prussian because his name was Alsatian, was lying in chains in the deepest dungeon of Vincennes.



His comrade-in-arms and superior came to the rescue in one of his irrepressible pastorals denouncing an abominable plot, "the wire-pullers of which were known," having for object to alarm Paris by rumours that several general officers were about to be arrested for having betrayed the military operations to the enemy. Trochu was angry, very angry. He protested against the insults to those who had been his "most devoted colleagues during the past four months." He stigmatized the absurd accusations as the most perfidious means that could be employed to prejudice the interests of the defence. This was his final sentence: "I intervene personally less because it is my duty to protect the honour of those who, under my eyes, have consecrated themselves with the most loyal unselfishness to the service of the country, than because I love the truth and hate injustice." It was hard to have patience with this too patient preacher, who would attempt to pacify a pack of wolves with Christian remonstrances. What a monument of soft-spined verbosity! If he knew the wire-pullers of whom he spoke, had moral certitude who they were it

was his duty to string them up to the nearest lamp-post. What was the result of his exaggerated forbearance? Some among the classes which ought to be intelligent and reasonable shook their heads, and said of him that he was the dupe of his own conscience. For one hour of the Corsican! How he would have hushed the censors had he to tear their tongues out! But Trochu, Governor and General-in-Chief, was the most-to-be-pitied entity in the city between the enemy without and the fools and knaves within. Basest amongst the latter, true Prussians of Paris, were the speculative journalists, who disgraced a great vocation. The Devil tempted swineherd St. Anthony by the unveiled vision of a professional beauty. In this century the Devil, more proficient in his art, would have put an ink-pot at the pig-warden's elbow. One of the Devil's apprentices was a contributor to a pestilent rag called *Les Nouvelles*, and in a single edition were to be read three mischievous paragraphs. The first insinuated that Ducrot was ill because of dissensions with the Governor; the next, that the editor had the key of some startling reprisals for the bombardment

which would make the hair of Europe stand on end; the third, that a staff-officer in the Quartier Vintimille had retained a German valet who naturally unsealed all despatches from headquarters before handing them to his master, and carefully read their contents. As long as scrofulous sheets like this were tolerated, Paris would be perturbed; and they would continue to be tolerated, Trochu ruling. The first Napoleon would have quieted the babblers in double-quick time. His proclamation would have been written on their backs by the public executioner at the cart's tail.

On the night of the 12th, the fire was extremely violent from ten o'clock to midnight on the district lying between the Luxembourg and the Invalides. A shell killed several horses at the stables of the cab-company near the latter; fifty-eight private houses were struck in and about the Rue de l'Ourcine, and the Boulevard Arago and the hospital of the Ourcine and two ambulances (those of Sainte-Périne and of Les Dames Augustine) came in for a share of the sinister gifts of the besiegers. The institution for the succour of blind children was likewise visited

by projectiles. A thick fog was out, under cover of which the Prussians might, perhaps, excuse themselves; but it was too late to put in such a plea now. There were thirteen victims on this night, of whom three were women and three foreigners. Two children, aged eight and eleven respectively, were killed at 8, Rue de Cotentin. Their father was a citizen of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, consequently a subject of the King of Holland. An American gentleman, Mr. Schwäger, a native of Louisville, was sitting in his bedchamber, in the Rue Casimir Delavigne, when a bomb entered and exploded, wounding him in the foot. One of his legs had to be amputated. And he had come to Paris for the benefit of his health!

On the morning of the 13th, a group of little children playing in the middle of the Rue St. Jacques were interrupted by a bursting shell. Two of them were killed and three wounded. There is a decree assimilating the victims of the bombardment (not foreigners) to soldiers killed before the enemy, and entitling their families to the same compensation. Did this dry the tears of those bairns' parents?

To-day, we had a glance at one of the comic aspects of war. Lord Granville formally asked M. Jules Favre to attend a Conference with a view to patching up a peace. This letter was dated London, 29th December, 1870, and only reached Paris on the evening of the 10th January, 1871. The Minister of the Interior declined to accept the invitation, lest he should be accused of weakness in quitting us at such an era of tribulation.

A second surprise was attempted on the night of the 13th on the Moulin de Pierre. It was conducted by General Blanchard, and was so clumsily managed that a portion of the force destined for the service had to be left behind. The Prussians were not to be caught napping. They received the head of the column with a rattling volley, and lit up the plain with flares, discovering the reserve *en échelon*, which they dislodged with shrapnel from the clump of batteries behind their trenches. The enemy, in his turn, made an attack on the outlying posts of Drancy, which was repulsed. There was a brush in front of Vitry between Admiral Pothureau's men and the Prussian fore-posts. The

French were the assailants, but their adversaries repaid their vivacity with interest a few hours later. Lieutenant Wahlan, of a regiment in von Tumpling's corps, who had ventured too far from his lines on a war-expedition of his own, was surrounded by Freeshooters and taken prisoner. Thus, uneasy night after night on the enormously-extended perimeter, at one point or another, there were miniature actions, boom of canon, and peppering of rifles, and now and again a capture or a fatality. Blood was shed by slow pints; but our thirst had grown by what it had drunk, and we did not take account of blood now unless it were shed by tuns.

Inside the city we were beginning to support a respectable burden of sufferings—I mean such a burden as gave us the conceit that we were collateral connections of martyrs in bearing it well. I had to write wrapped up in bed often for want of fuel; I had to wait for hours for my rations of horse, which I had to gobble raw for want of fuel again. But then mine was a double ration, for my aged housekeeper had an unconquerable prejudice against

the flesh of the noble animal. Fortunately I was not a gross eater, but O'Donovan was blest, or cursed, with a stomach whose mighty craving was not to be cheated. Sometimes we dined on Duke Humphrey's monument, having exhausted our ordinary alimentary resources at breakfast. The feast of the Barmecides was familiar. For supper we tightened our belts and smoked. Tobacco, you are a treasure ! best of companions in solitude, best of good fellows in society ; when hungry, you stay the pangs of appetite ; when full-fed, you fillip digestion ; in pain, you relieve ; in grief, you console ; you soothe the pensive, you inspire the dull ; you are the first best gift of the New World to the Old. To God be thanks, I preserved a sound constitution during the trials of this tedious siege. When people were dying around from famine, fever, lung-inflammation and small-pox, from wounds and from sheer wasting of the vital forces, I kept good countenance, and had no immediate afflictions to worry me but the cold, some famishment, and neuralgia. To avert cold I piled rugs, top-coats, and strips of carpet plentifully over the blankets ; to ward off the pangs

of hunger and neuralgia, the nearest approach to a specific I knew was tobacco. And yet a fanatic had written a pamphlet to demonstrate that the calamities, which had befallen France, were due to her insatiate devotion to tobacco! As if the Germans did not smoke. Horse did not supply much animal heat, and called for kitchening. I was even thankful for a shaving of garlic, which I received from Citizen Prassophagus. O'Donovan and I had a precious find one day. In rummaging a chest of drawers we came across a cruet-stand with a flask half full of congealed olive-oil. We thawed that oil by natural warmth on the hatching plan, and by scrupulous husbanding made it last for days. We let it saturate our bread, drop by drop, and then devoured the titbit with a relish. That bread! If it were only the pumpernickel which Voltaire sneered at as a "hard stone, black and gluey, composed, according to the legend, of a species of rye."

A vastly humorous mock-heroic poem might have been written by the author of "The Splendid Shilling," on the theme of "Looking for a Loaf." I had some adventures in quest of one on the morning



of the 14th of January, which are worthy of doggerel, though I give them in prose. Hungering, and having no bread, I set out on a voyage of discovery. O'Donovan had conveyed to me, under the pledge of secrecy, some information which impelled me to make a descent upon a bakery behind the Opéra-Comique. He had heard there was a queue of two hundred persons outside it. When I got there, queue there was none, and the shop was shut. I turned into a *crémérie* near, and ate a dish of tapioca soup. But nothing can substitute bread. It is, indeed, the staff of life. Afterwards I betook myself to a café on the Grand Boulevard to enjoy a *gloria*—that is, a cup of coffee with a thimbleful of brandy in it; a battalion of the National Guard, with brass band (very rare) chancing to pass by, I lit a cigar and followed the music. It was going towards the west. Opposite the Madeleine, as fine-looking a sailor as ever I saw walked by, and I stopped to admire him. At the Rue Royale the band turned down towards the Place de la Concorde, and I kept in its wake, for a lively quickstep was not a pleasure to be despised in those days of dul-

ness. On the Avenue of the Champs Elysées, a captain of Volunteer Cavalry, pacing beside me, began talking fire and brimstone against the Prussians. He was talking *at* me. I felt it at once. Suddenly accosting me, he said: "What do you think of the Prussians, monsieur?"

I removed my cigar and answered quietly, that it would be better for Paris if they were farther from it.

"*Je vous prie de m'accompagner au Palais de l'Industrie,*" he added.

"I don't know you, monsieur," I said; "and I don't accede to prayers from strangers."

The want of that loaf had soured my usually happy temper.

"*Je vous prie encore.*"

"Arrest me frankly in the name of the Republic, and I go."

He would not, but told me that I had been pointed out to him as a suspicious character. As it was his privilege in that case to put me to the question, and as he wore an armlet of crape, I accompanied him to the Palais de l'Industrie, where

there was a sort of staff-post, to whose tender mercies he consigned me. How I regretted that I had left behind my silver-banded cap and my red badge. I showed my passport. Nobody could read it, and nobody would undertake to release me. Instead, I was given in charge, to the flattering of their self-importance, to five National Guards, who marched me off with fixed bayonets to one of their headquarters at the Palace of the Elysée. A crowd of women hooted me on the way, and called out "Bismarck," and "Badinguet." We crossed a party of the civic force going to the ramparts. They hissed and objurgated, and made threatening signs with the weapons they were unworthy to carry. I suppose I must have smiled sarcastically.

"Oh, the cold-blooded ruffian!" yelled the women.

At the Elysée I was presented to a red-faced colonel. He looked at me, and I returned his look.

"What is it?" he asked.

"That is exactly what I want to know," I answered.

"Do you belong to the National Guard?"

"I have not that supreme happiness."

"Then I have nothing to do in the matter; it enters into the functions of the police commissary."

I was conducted to the police commissary in the Rue Cambacérès, still surrounded by my escort.

The moment the commissary, a grey-haired gentleman, looked at my passport, and recognised the signature at the foot, he bowed, said, "*Ah ! je le connais*, Lord Lyons. 'Tis a regrettable mistake, monsieur; you are at liberty."

I asked him what were the suspicions which had led to my arrest. The recital sounds incredible, but it is strictly true, and will show better than pages of writing the frantic fantasies to which convulsive Paris gave itself up. A wiseacre of the National Guard had dogged me for hours, and had given information that I had been taking military observations of the Comic Opera House; that I had professionally inspected a sailor, and that I had stepped martially to the music of a brass band! The amateur detective was disappointed that he had not caught a spy, and inwardly regarded the commissary as a traitor, until, by a happy thought

—why did it not strike me before ?—I flourished a receipt for a twenty-franc donation to an Ambulance, and my last summons to my duty as a Brigadier of the Civic Corps of Security of the Quarter of St. George. I made that amateur detective a courteous speech ; I felicitated him on his patriotic watchfulness ; I distinctly assured him that he was not an ass, and I insisted on embracing him. It was a fraternal hug. I calculate I must have squeezed all the spare wind out of his body. I parted with my escort at the door, and handed them the price of a drink to compensate them for the lost satisfaction of having to execute the first cousin to von Moltke. As I moved off I vowed mentally that in future I would curb my musings on the departed glories of closed theatres, and restrain my approval of the muscular development of brawny seamen ; but I despaired of ever correcting my taste for military music.

I almost blush at the recital of small personal haps and woes when I recall the barbarities lavishly inflicted upon the city in quarters not so secure as that to which blind chance had assigned me and

my belongings. On the night of the 13th, for example, two infants were killed and two wounded, one woman killed and seven wounded. Nor were losses confined to life and limb. The magnificent collection of orchids in the Jardin des Plantes, representing a money value of six hundred thousand francs, was completely spoiled. There was a regular hail of missiles on the glass-roof of the hot-houses. Pictures to the value of twenty thousand francs were made tatters of in the studio of Nanteuil, the painter; and the dispensary of Courserrant, the oculist, was broken into by a bolt that shivered all his phials to atoms, and, by singular caprice, did not injure one of the numerous patients in waiting. The Odéon theatre, transformed into a hospital, was shaken to its foundations by two enormous projectiles which crashed through the slates; and the nurses had to take their trembling charges on their backs in the middle of the night and carry them down to the vaults. Huge fragments of metal pounded on the roof of the church of St. Sulpice, tore through the joists, and split into fiery morsels on the flagstones. A shell bounded into the paleonto-

logical collection of the School of Mines, and destroyed specimens worth two thousand pounds sterling. The convents of the Carmelites and the Sacred Heart, and the monastery of the Christian Brothers were hit. Six women, who were waiting for their rations outside a municipal canteen in the Rue Lecourbe, were killed by the explosion of a single shell. This was warfare. Although I was a neutral, and individually suffered nothing from this bombardment, it kindled ire and resentment in my breast; and now, although I have erased many very bitter reflections in my diary, I look back upon it with loathing. Was it to be marvelled at that the Parisians were vengeful, and that Louis Blanc likened the Germans to Mohicans with a Polytechnic training? And this was warfare—cruel and wicked so often, dastardly sometimes. The bombardment did not hasten the capitulation by one hour; therefore all this smiting of the houses of religion and philanthropy was, in a sense, wanton. Not if the Germans had razed the tomb of Richelieu; had levelled to the dust the palace of Catherine de Medici; had burned all the rare old tomes in the

library of Ste. Geneviève; had demolished that unique sample of antiquity, the Cluny Hotel; had shattered the telescopes in the Observatory that reveal the glories and mysteries of the heavens, or crushed the church-spires that point the way to the God that reigns there—would the beleaguered city have precipitated its surrender.

With the knowledge that eighty peaceable inhabitants of Paris had been slain, and one hundred and ninety-four mutilated by this bombardment; that thousands of the poor, young and old, the bedridden, cripples, consumptives, had been driven from their homes, and were trooping wearily, or being trundled in hand-carts, to such shelter as the bounty of their fellows could afford, it was hard even for a foreigner to preserve his calmness.

By consensus of the civilized world, bombardments are looked upon as inhuman. There was a cry of indignation in England when a United States corvette sent bombs into Greytown; there were men just enough to disapprove of the bombardment of the military port of Odessa by British men-of-war, and of that of Peiho even as a chastise-



ment of murders by the body-servants of sundry mandarins. There were expostulations when the Emperor of Austria by his lieutenant, Windischgrätz, bombarded insurgent Vienna in 1848, and when the Sardinian fleet bombarded Ancona in 1860; but Francis Joseph had been ruler of the one place and Victor Emmanuel hoped to be ruler of the other; and besides, forty-eight hours' notice was given in each instance to the obnoxious cities to submit or be prepared for the worst. It will not do for Germans to plead before the tribunal of history that they were no more ungenerous than the genius-monster they execrate—that First Napoleon, who sent a hell-fire from his guns on naked Pressburg. He had lived half a century before, and he did not belong to a nation which prides itself on obligatory instruction.

That bombardment was a Massacre of Innocents, a Carnival of Blood.

Germany, when she settles down to sober meditation upon it, will be grieved that public schools were fired upon, and the subjects of neutral Powers mutilated in her glorious name—humbled that the

countrymen of Schiller and Goethe, Holbein and Albrecht Dürer, tried to give libraries and art-treasures to the flames—horrified that Generals who invoked the patronage of God in every bulletin, and summoned the Johanniter to their side, had pointed their guns on the roofs of churches and hospitals. It was no honour to German soldiers, no credit to the German monarchy.

Still the thing was carried on deliberately. There could be no dissimulation about it now. The favourite landing-place of missiles was the Rue Monge, where the ruins of a Roman arena had been disinterred when the street was opened a few years before, and where a statue of Arouët, surnamed Voltaire, replacing that of Prince Eugène, was provisionally erected. There was an irony in this unkindly Prussian tribute hurtling round the figure of the Frenchman who had been such a courtier of Frederick the Great.

By the *Official* of the 15th, we learned that the members of the diplomatic body which remained in the beleaguered city had sent Count Bismarck a protest against the unnotified bombardment, in

the name of those they were here to protect. Some twenty signatures were attached to this instrument, and amongst them was *not* that of an Englishman. The Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Empire of Hindustan was represented by a stained flag tucking itself in from the cold to a stumpy flagstaff, a carved lion and unicorn fighting for a new coat of gilding, a stale copy of the *Times*, and a fat French porter. Unless that functionary were to be run through a sausage-machine and distributed amongst the necessitous of the British colony, it was difficult to discover the utility of his presence.

The bombardment had thirty-three victims inside the walls within the past twenty-four hours. The Government was aware that the Latin Quarter was in range of the German batteries, yet it left wounded men in flimsy ambulances in the Luxembourg Garden. All this time stone images of horses were carefully shielded in portions of the town a mile more to the interior—portions which by no possibility could be reached while the forts were standing. Orders were given weeks before to have the space

in front of the Panthéon unpaved as a precaution ; the work was begun but never finished, and yesterday five paviors were killed and two wounded while engaged uprooting the stones. Their deaths and wounds lay at the door of Bumbledom in bullion and cocked-hat.

The south front had the monopoly of din on this date, the ships' guns of the 6th, 7th, and 8th *secteurs* lending aid to the forts. To the scansion of the cannon, the strophes of "Amphitryon" were recited on the boards of the Théâtre Français, the house of Molière, for this was the 249th anniversary of the birth of the dramatist. The Mobiles of the Hérault, under Lieutenant Laurent, celebrated the intellectual jubilee by slaughtering five Germans, including an officer, and wounding ten at the bridge of Champigny.

On the 16th, the hazy weather which had been prevalent cleared up somewhat, and the gunners on the ramparts were better able to distinguish the batteries which were pestering the forts with their attentions. These batteries were admirably served. The barracks on Montrouge, Vanves, and Issy were

untenable, and had to be evacuated. At Bagneux the enemy was enterprising on this morning, and made a point on the Maison Millaud ; but he was repulsed, and Montrouge sent him a few speed-well shots on his retreat. On the succeeding night he made an assault on the trenches at Bondy. He was active everywhere. A temerarious field-battery actually unlimbered in front of the redoubt of the Moulin-Saquet, and calmly began firing upon it ; the artillery of position replied and silenced it, dismounting the guns. Weight of metal will tell.

I had another unpleasantness to-day, but custom indurates, and I had learned to take things imperturbably. It appeared the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, of December 8th, published a letter purporting to be copied from the *Standard* with respect to the treatment of the German prisoners in Paris ; which letter stated that they were confined in a foul and unhealthy building. From the context, this letter must have been mine ; I had the original by me, and consulted it. The comparison staggered me. Never had I read a more cleverly distorted epitome of any production, agreeing in the main, but with

cunning alterations and suppressions that completely altered its tone and meaning. The *Gaulois* got hold of the German paper, and denounced "the man" (your humble servant) who wrote such "turpitudes," and reminded him that Paris "gave him hospitality." Not to his knowledge, assuredly, unless the innkeeper to whom a high price is paid for a wretched dinner is extending hospitality. It was possible that the *Allgemeine Zeitung* had misquoted the *Standard*. It was also possible that the *Gaulois* had mistranslated the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. What could be the French conception of hospitality? Mr. Richard Wallace was said to have made donations of upwards of a million of francs to the charities of Paris since the investment. The Parisians were not thankless. Brimful of gratitude, they hospitably elected him a member of the Jockey Club, and hospitably presented him with—two camellias.

On the 17th the play of projectiles on the south front continued. The enemy had taken Issy in reverse from Clamart, and a couple of thousand Marines had to spend the night transporting the contents of one of the magazines of the fort to the

church of the village in its rear. Montrouge was the sole fort attacked which gave back blow for blow, and for the first time, after twelve days' bombardment and nigh four months' siege, the artillery of the *secteur* behind was able to send a shot in its support.

On the 18th it was evident provisions were nearing their term, for M. Magnin offered 25 francs reward per quintal to anyone informing the authorities of the existence of wheat, rye, or barley stowed away in secret. And M. Ferry gave notice that the bread would be rationed from to-morrow at 300 grammes (3-5ths of a pound) daily for adults, and half that quantity for children. The lodgings of those absent from Paris were likewise requisitioned for the wounded and the refugees from the bombarded districts; and the comestibles and combustibles therein were to be given up, and their value restored to the owners at their return. A decree appeared enjoining the husbandmen who had brought in grains for seed to give them up in three days under pain of confiscation, three months' imprisonment, and £40 fine. They were to be paid 50 francs

the quintal. The Mayor of the 9th arrondissement called on all citizens over eighteen, exempt from service of other kind, to join the Corps Civique ("ours") within three days, under a law of 1790, prescribing measures to ensure the public safety, and provide against calamitous visitations. An order of the day was issued by General Le Flô, announcing that he had been invested with the command of the troops for the defence of the city and St. Denis *in the absence of the Governor*, and summoning the generals of engineers and artillery, and of the 1st division and others, to meet him at one p.m. at the Ministry of War. And, lastly, there was a proclamation of the members of the Government (to which Trochu's name was not signed) which accused the enemy of killing our wives and children, and called on those who could shed their life-blood on the battle-field to march against the foe, and those who remained behind to "suffer and die if necessary, but to conquer;" the meaning of which was that we were on the eve of a sortie. The impatient National Guards were to get the opportunity they had asked for.



## CHAPTER VIII.

The Sortie of Despair—Trochu's Plan—A Bewildered Army-Corps—The Assault of Montretout—Brilliant Advance of the Centre—"You are here to die!"—Mein Herr is Jocose—The late General Ducrot—Death of Rochebrune—The Masterful German Artillery—Night and Retreat—List of Casualties—Gallantry of the National Guard—Paris in Suspense—Painful Revelations—Popular Verdict on Trochu.

THE last sortie was made on the 19th of January. A mad, mismanaged, wanton sortie it was; but Trochu felt that these intractable National Guards would not listen to reason until they had been depleted of angry blood. And he determined to lance them. The hopeless attempt to break out was to be tried towards the west. As large a force as could be spared, without denuding the line of defence, was detailed for the duty. On the evening of the 18th the General and his staff left the Louvre

for the citadel of Mont Valérien, from which, as midway stand—a very watch-tower, in fact—the operations were to be directed by him in person. They were to be entrusted to three *corps d'armée* under the commands respectively of Vinoy, de Bellemare, and Ducrot, all of whom were closeted with Trochu on the night before the action. To Vinoy was assigned the conduct of the attack on the left, which was to be pressed on Montretout and the villas and grounds bordering St. Cloud, belonging to Messieurs Béarn, Pozzo di Borgo, Armengaud, and Zimmerman. In the original plan for the fortification of Paris, there had been an intention to construct a redoubt at Montretout, but this intention had never been carried out. With an acute appreciation of the value of the position, one of the first cares of the enemy had been to seize on it, as he had on Châtillon. It was of vital importance to re-take Montretout. From it, the wood of St. Cloud and the highway to Versailles could be raked, and the Prussian batteries of Meudon, which spread trouble in Grenelle and the Point du Jour, could be turned. The centre of the

attack, under de Bellemare, was to start from Courbevoie at the right rear of Mont Valérien, and had for objective the eastern portion of La Bergerie, opposite Garches. The right was to operate on the wooded eminence to the west of the Park of Buzenval, and make a simultaneous attack on Longboyau, and if possible penetrate to the Lupin stud-farm in front of Celle St. Cloud, and to the left of Garches. Upwards of one hundred thousand men, embracing regulars, Mobiles, and the active National Guard, supported by a strong artillery, constituted the sallying force. The line of front, when battle was joined, did not extend quite four miles English across. The task of bringing together and handling such numbers, most of them new to the shock of arms, within such a narrow compass, was arduous and delicate; the concentration was not effected without considerable anxiety and some bungling, and, to make matters worse, the night was obscure, and the morning of the 19th was darkened by a curtain of thick fog, Thames-like in its consistence and clayey hue. The advance was fixed for six a.m., but owing to the non-arrival

of the army corps of the right it was retarded for several hours. Ducrot's delay was explained by the circumstance that he had some seven and a half miles English to traverse, in the dark, on a railway hampered with obstructions, and a high-road occupied by a train of artillery which had lost its way. This occurred not in Cochin-China, but a short drive from Paris, on a bit of country every feature of which could have been mastered in half an hour by an intelligent huntsman, with the aid of the staff-maps and a reconnoitring glass. Nor was the delay the only blunder which dislocated Trochu's conception. The men of the National Guard had been kept under arms, packs on their backs and four days' provisions, making in all a burden of four stone weight, from two in the morning. The Line, too, were haggard and worn with fatigue, and marched without elasticity of step when they got the word to go forward at ten o'clock. Their officers—a finer body of officers seldom stood—had to goad them to their work, in some cases by putting revolvers to their ears. Vinoy's command emerged from behind Mont Valérien by the road parallel to

the Seine, skirting the right of a brickyard, and concealed for a space by the hillock of La Fouilleuse. The column of assault consisted of the Zouaves, the 136th of the Line, and several battalions of the National Guard, notably the 107th. By eleven it had taken possession of the heights of Montretout and the adjacent villas without excessive difficulty. The foemen, pounced upon unexpectedly, resisted stiffly for a while, but were overpowered by numbers. Sixty of them, mostly belonging to a regiment from the Grand Duchy of Posen, were disarmed. They pleaded that they had been taken unawares, and they looked it. It was a new sensation to catch soldiers of their army unawares. The Zouaves repolished their sullied escutcheon here: they were foremost in the onset, and careered over three entrenchments at accelerated pace. The French having secured their prisoners, descended to St. Cloud, and scoured the village, taking particular pains in searching the cellars. They had profited by the lesson of Ville-Evrard. Skirmishers pushed forward and crackled at the retreating enemy, who had sought refuge in the closer growths of the plan-

tations. While the left was thus successful, the centre marched down the slope of Mont Valérien unopposed, until it reached the farm of La Fouilleuse, to the west of the brickyard, and there its advance was blocked by a withering fire of small arms. Twice the column had to fall back, but on the third attempt it cheered, rushed forward with the bayonet, and carried the position. The National Guards, who took part in this onslaught, were full of ardour. This, the left wing of the centre, moved on to the elevated cross-road between La Fouilleuse and St. Cloud, where it had been instructed to form a junction with the left front. Inflamed with the glow of combat, and confident from its progress hitherto, it carried this position also with the white arm; but de Bellemare's right was stopped by the park wall of the château of Buzenval. Dynamite was brought into requisition to burst open a breach, as it was used to blow up some of the houses which served as shelter to the enemy. It was a great success—as useful as a company of sappers, and much cleaner and speedier in its destructiveness. Through the shattered masonry the red-trousers

penetrated the grounds of the country-house, clambered the heights of La Bergerie, and spread themselves over the tangled and broken tract of vineyards, groves, and gardens stretching to the right towards Celle St. Cloud by the lakelet of St. Cucufa. Support from Ducrot's corps was looked for in vain, and de Bellemare had to bring up part of his reserve to hold his grip. Alignment was no longer preserved; it was a series of isolated struggles; men "fought for their own hand," like Hal o' the Wynd; they lost sight of their officers, or were lost sight of by them. The independent firing was incessant; most of it was lamentably useless. The enthusiastic but untrained men in front blazed away at the trees, and were laid low in sections by the Prussians, safe behind their breastworks, and in some instances were shot in the back by their own comrades scattered too much to the rear. A story was told of a colonel—of the Line, it was said, but I trust not—asking the 116th battalion of the civic force to take a loopholed wall in front.

"How! Don't you see we are certain of death if we face it?" answered M. Baker, a lieutenant of the National Guard.

"You are here to die," said the other grimly.

"And the Line?" retorted the lieutenant. "But I'll show you the National Guard know how to die. Come on, my lads!" and he whirled a stick over his head. At the same moment he turned on himself and reeled on the sod, smitten in the forehead by a bullet from one of the loopholes in the wall.

A corporal dashed forward, hoisted himself up somehow, and clubbed his chassepot to knock aside the muzzles of the guns of the defenders; but he soon toppled over in their midst a corpse. The Prussians did not expose their heads but to take aim or to *make grimaces* at the French!

"The only one I saw," a man of the 116th told me, "was a joker who put his fingers to his nose for me."

My informant, a law-student, had a narrow escape in the retreat. A bullet cleft through his knapsack, flattened itself against his belt, and dropped into his pouch. Eight comrades of his squad of ten were shot down.

What was Ducrot doing all this time? The same ill-luck which attended him on the 29th of



November, when his bridges disappointed, pursued him still. His troops were on foot at three in the morning, but had to march from St. Denis round the arc of a circle in the mirk of a black night and a muggy dawn. The road by which they had to pass, leading by Nanterre and Rueil, was swept by a Prussian battery at the Quarries of St. Denis, on the other side of the Seine, as with a besom. They could not stand the hail of mitraille; the field-artillery was ineffective to check it, and finally the passage of Ducrot's extreme right was only guaranteed by salvoes from Mont Valérien and the novel aid of a cuirassed locomotive with heavy guns on two armour-clad waggons which came gliding along the St. Germain line of rail. But Ducrot arrived two hours too late, and the simultaneity of the attack was marred. When the three corps were in action together an attempt was made to converge them on La Bergerie, while the bastions of the 6th *secteur* opened on Sèvres and the Park of St. Cloud. There was a dogged tussle at the Porte de Longboyau (a mile south of Malmaison), and Ducrot, who is a good die-hard General of Brigade and

no more, had repeatedly to lead his troops to the onslaught, but was unable to gain ground. It is one of the freaks of war that this man, who thrust himself continuously into the gap of danger, got off without a scratch. His was the luck that is handmaid of temerity. Less favoured of fate was Rochebrune. He who had led the "Zouaves of Death" in the struggle for Polish independence was dismissed to death by a Polish hand. His end was in keeping with his daring and adventurous character. He was cheering on the 19th of Paris, one of the newly organized regiments, of which he was colonel, close by Rueil. They had been maltreated by a deadly rifle-spatter, when Rochebrune, thinking the plucky thing the safest thing, gave the order to advance with the cold steel. Hardly had the word of command passed his lips when he dropped from the saddle; he was lifeless before he touched the sod.

That dreadful unanticipated battery at the Quarries was not to be silenced or circumvented. A shell swinging from it burst right under a waggon of the American Ambulance on the highway between

Rueil and Nanterre, roughly capsized the vehicle, and dispersed the hospital staff which had made this point their headquarters. As a consequence, the conspicuous distinctive flags were removed in the afternoon from all the ambulances.

By two o'clock the Prussians had brought up reinforcements of infantry and a formidable artillery. For a couple of hours a tremendous duel of cannon was waged ; but the French guns were overmastered, particularly by the powerful battery at Garches.

At four o'clock the enemy made an impetuous advance on the French left and centre, and drove them back ; "nevertheless," ran the official report, "the troops returned to the front at the close of the day." The crest of the heights was once more reached, but night approaching, and there being no facility for advancing the artillery, these troops had to be withdrawn out of danger of an offensive return. At half-past six Montretout was abandoned, and the French, wearied with long hours of march and combat, had to retire to the trenches of Mont Valérien or inside the ramparts of Paris. The sortie, which never had the faintest chance of

creating outlet, was an admitted failure. The idea of evacuating Montretout must have been precipitate, for Commander de Lareinty and three hundred of the Mobiles of the Loire-Inférieure were forgotten there, and were quietly taken prisoners by the Germans, as compensation with interest for the sixty captured Poseners. This ultimate operation had one wholesome effect—the National Guards, who were yelling, “Let us go forth and break the jaws of the wicked, and pluck the spoil out of their teeth,” were taught that it was easier to brag than to do. Instead of returning spoil-laden, they had, too many of them, flung away their impedimenta, food and all, to the wicked but indomitable foe when the supreme moment arrived.

If this were Trochu’s plan, what a shrewd and perfect plan it was—on paper! Nothing could have been more artistically devised. His flanks were protected by the arms of the Seine. The intervention of that battery at the Quarries was an accident. The fog, which bewildered and led astray his aides-de-camp when sent with orders, but did not hinder the surprised Prussians from

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groping their way to their positions, was another accident. Assuredly the plan must have been crowned with success, had the National Guards been as well disciplined as they were sanguine; had the Mobiles been as intelligent as they were docile; had the Linesmen been as resolute as their officers, and had the officers had a clear notion where they were going; had the staff a better acquaintance with the lie of the land; had the mud not been so sticky as to clog the wheels of the gun-carriages; and had the Germans only stood with their arms akimbo.

The butcher's bill in this deplorable, deliberately rash adventure was costly. In mere numbers the losses were serious, but in quality they were more serious. Many who had passed scathless through the vicissitudes of dozens of campaigns met their fate. For not a few, it was not only their first but their last fight. The National Guard suffered heavily, especially the battalions recruited from the quarters of the *Chaussée d'Antin* and the *Bourse*. Regnault, he who had painted that weirdly realistic Moorish execution, and whose striking picture of Juan Prim on a horse that seemed to leap from the

canvas, was a feature of the Salon of 1868, had been mowed down by the merciless Reaper. The master, for such he was, who held such a bold, original brush, and gave such roseate promise, was but twenty-seven. Horrid war! Sand-bags were piled round the picture-galleries to protect the great works they contained, and the men whose genius had produced them were sent out to fruitless death amid the hovering vapours of the battle-field. Literature had its losses to deplore, too. Marius Topin, author and historian, was slain at the head of a battalion. The Faubourg St. Germain had more than its share in the mourning. The Marquis de Coriolis, captain of the Royal Guard under Louis XVIII., had enrolled himself in the 15th Parisian Regiment, though sixty-seven years of age. He fell, pierced by a ball in the forehead, and another in the chest. Vrignault, editor of the *Liberté*, who was acting courageously as lieutenant and standard-bearer of the 16th, was beside him, and called the chaplain of the corps to the spot.

“We can do no more for him now than recite the *De Profundis*,” said the clergyman.

M. d'Estourmel, familiar in the Corps Législatif, was likewise amongst the slain, and Gustave Lambert, the explorer, who had set his heart upon winning for France the renown of discovering the North Pole. Lieutenant de Langle, orderly officer to Trochu, was hit in the breast by a bullet—a chassepot bullet, fired by a Frenchman in alarm, and sank dead on his charger's mane. De Cevennes, the painter, and Maurice Bixio, nephew to M. de Lesseps, of Suez Canal fame, were desperately wounded; and Victor, the son of the pioneer of civilization, who was an orderly officer to General Ducrot, was struck by a ball in the thigh while standing by his chief. The colonel of the 109th of the Line was also amongst the severely wounded, and Count de Montbrison, commandant of one of the battalions of the Loiret. In the same sad catalogue were Langlois of the 116th and Saugé of the 78th. Young Séveste, one of the artists of the Théâtre Français, had to be conveyed—a grievous spectacle—to the ambulance in the playhouse where he had so often mimicked grief. He had to undergo amputation of a leg to save

his life. Gennaro Perelli, a Sicilian pianist and composer, who had been chosen captain of a free corps, was struck, and the surgeons were forced to cut off his right arm. The needle-gun was not tender for the arts.

Among the episodes of the day was related the killing of a German officer of high rank by Corporal Houdan, of the National Guards of Passy, who was decorated on the field by General de Bellemare. Another, of a kind more affecting, was the arrival of Madame Rochebrune from Paris, at Rueil, to inquire after her brave husband. He had just been brought in dead ; and it was only by the pious fraud of a friend, who ran her into a house under pretext of escaping shells, that she had not the awful trial of suddenly alighting on his blood-stained corpse.

Among the battalions of the civic force that bore off most honours were the 35th and 71st, and the 116th, which lent goodly help in rescuing the Government from the Communists. There were occasional natural falterings ; for example, in the 13th, raised in the neighbourhood of the Central Markets ; but their lieutenant-colonel, Mosneron-



Dupin, a fearless man into whom a breath of Ney seemed to have entered, kindled them with the heat of his own courage. They had wavered, but they resumed the advance at the double, with bayonets lowered, and the Prussians thought it prudent to scurry to cover.

While this bloody drama was being enacted at such a short distance outside the barriers, Paris was in a feverish flutter of agitation. The press of inquietude on over a million and a half of non-combatants, cooped up in the limited area of a few square miles, was intense. How their hearts throbbed at the slightest whisper from the field, where son, brother, husband, or father, the nearest and dearest, were battling! And how anxiously every spurt of smoke on the horizon was interrogated, as if that could afford information of the absent for whose lot they were trembling! Station was taken on every rising-ground that gave prospect, or the fringe of a prospect, of the country towards St. Cloud—a smiling country, with its bright river winding between vine-clad undulations set with charming villas a few months ago. How

desolate now! Every avenue from the Arch of Triumph to Boulogne, Courbevoie, and the northern suburbs was thronged with flushed, low-conversing, anxious groups, in which women and children predominated, watching for the return of the orderlies that brought word how the battle went, or of the ambulances that brought back its victims. The latter did not lack. At quick intervals they were trundled by, the shorn tithes of the harvest of glory; and the spectators respectfully uncovered to the hospital-vans as they would to a passing hearse.

On the morning after the retirement to the trenches, those who had indulged in premature rejoicings were shocked by the news that passed from mouth to mouth, over the meagre breakfast, that the positions taken from the Germans had been abandoned to them again perforce. Later in the day the optimists were busy spreading the report that they had been retaken, but the ambulances returning from the field left no opening for hope. The evening papers published a funereal despatch from Trochu at Mont Valérien, praying his repre-

sentative at the Louvre to exert himself to obtain a suspension of arms for *two days* to bury the dead, and demanding that solidly constructed carts and volunteers in large numbers should be sent out for the purpose. Picture to yourself the dismay this created ! Stories were circulated that ten thousand men had been put *hors de combat*. This was an over-estimation on the face of it, as palpably as that other story that ran yesterday that ten thousand oxen had been captured from the enemy, and which had its origin in the fact that a herd of five hundred, parked at Grenelle, had been removed across the city to la Villette on account of the bombardment.

The growing instinct of disaster received tangible confirmation in the clammy twilight, when bodies of the National Guard came straggling in, foot-sore and harassed. Discipline had been thrown to the winds. Some of them (very few indeed) had Prussian helmets dangling as trophies from the muzzles of their chassepots. Here is an instructive outburst, taken *verbatim* from the lips of one of the train-band : " Our superior officers are idiots. My colonel got orders to occupy the Maison Craon, but

he did not know where it was, nor was there any one there to tell him. For my own part, I amused myself firing twenty-five of my hundred cartridges into the trees; but I'll swear I did not hit a single Prussian except by accident. We did not see them to hit!"

By degrees the vexing truth leaked out as to the failure of the final attempt at riving the hoop—we were hermetically sealed in—and ugly recriminations were bandied. It was said that some battalions of the civic force spent thirty-six hours in getting to their positions by tramping along fantastic routes, and that others had been twenty-four hours without food when they got into line; that the dynamitards ordered up to make breaches effected one in a wall which their own countrymen had already passed, and had no dynamite when it was really required to blow up another; that a battery of French artillery fired on a battalion of the 4th Zouaves while it was mounting to the brow of Montretout, killing and wounding several; that the right wing was clubbed higgledy-piggledy at Rueil from five to ten p.m.; that Ducrot had no

orders, and that to his aide-de-camp, M. Favrot of Franchetti's Scouts, despatched to Mont Valérien to seek for orders, reply was given that Trochu had gone away, leaving no message, and nobody knew where to find him. To add to the sense of boding misfortune that was settling gloomily over Paris, came a pigeon with a message from Bordeaux up to the 14th inst., narrating the defeat of Chanzy, with a loss of twelve guns and 10,000 men by Prince Frederick Charles, and his subsequent retreat behind Mayenne, and an inauspicious fight of Bourbaki at Villersexel, near Belfort. Then the tales of the army of succour were all tales told by idiots, and signified nothing. Hope of deliverance from the provinces there was none.

The self-controlled felt that Trochu would be relieved from his pledge of not capitulating without the necessity of sacrificing his life—a calamity he did not appear to avoid, for he never spared his person. The Communists, however, were not self-controlled. They swore Monsieur Trochu should be hanged. That was unjust. The General was conscientious, too conscientious to be militarily

great, too accomplished a theorist to be decisive in action ; a marvellous organizer, but not qualified by breadth of view or quickness of grasp to manœuvre one hundred thousand men under fire. Assiduous and accessible, he might have made an excellent Civil Governor in time of peace, but the community to be governed should not have been volcanic Paris. There was not enough of the devil in him to make a good general. He would have made an exemplary bishop, beloved and revered, the boast and treasure of his flock.

## CHAPTER IX.

Starvation—Sorrows of a Woman of the People—Eating the Butte Montmartre — Street-Hawkers — Bombardment of St. Denis—Vinoy *vice* Trochu—Mazas Jail Delivered — Bloodshed at the Hôtel de Ville — The Communistic Snake Scotched—The Republic Muzzles Meetings and Gags the Press—Still the Bombardment—Stoic Philosophy—Nature's Shroud—The Marauding Sparrow—Beginning of the End—The Cup of Gall—A Litany of Dolours and Deceits.

“STARVATION is very little when you are used to it,” says Thackeray, masquerading and moralizing as Ikey Solomons. It is my private belief he knew nothing about it. Used or not used to it, starvation is a great deal; and often the wight who is asked to accustom himself to it dies in the process, like the horse in the story whom his penurious master was training to live on three straws a day. In this final phase of the defence we were beginning to feel some-

thing close akin to starvation. We were all rationed for bread as for our butcher's portion, and we all had to present ourselves at the baker's to whose district we were assigned, to hand in our tickets and receive our dole. When not on duty I usually overslept myself, the mornings were so raw and bleary; and it is so pleasant to lie between the blankets when there is neither fuel to give artificial heat, nor animal food to replenish the fire in the natural furnace. Vegetarianism is a heresy, and a failure; I have tried it, and pronounce it so. These modern Nebuchadnezzars have no stamina; forty-thousand beef-fed British soldiers can hold millions of rice-eaters in thrall. There were painful scenes at some of these distributions of provisions. I recollect one morning having hurried to the baker's at the last moment, weak, ravenous, down in the mouth, and shuddering with the cold. The etiquette was "first come, first served." I had to station myself at the tail-end of the queue, and there was a very long queue at that door, longer than I had ever seen outside the *Comédie Française*. We were two-and-two. Beside me was a woman of the



people, some thirty years old—buxom, red-cheeked, with a bright grey eye, brawny arms, and a rich voice that positively laughed when she spoke. She wore a small white cap over her black braids, carefully arranged so as to bring into relief a pair of massive yellow earrings. We were a rueful company, but that woman of the people kept us alive with her sallies. She put soul into us. As each newcomer arrived and took a place in the rear she broke out into merry banter. She declared that if this thing were to continue much longer, she would tire of it and leave Paris altogether; she announced that General von Moltke had lost the glass of one of his spectacles, poor man, and now looked on the French with a sinister eye; she expressed her fearful trouble of mind because she did not know whether she would have *pâté de foi gras* from Strasburg or truffles *à l'Italienne* for dinner that evening, and she had asked some half-dozen friends round to the feast. In front of her was an elderly dapper thin man, with short hair of iron-grey, and sharp, saturnine countenance, who looked at her occasionally as she joked, when his sharp, saturnine

countenance seemed to broaden and brighten. His turn came at length. He received his puny allowance of the so-called bread, and then the door of the bakery was slammed to, and word passed that the stock was exhausted—there were no more loaves that day! The cheerful woman of the people grew white, reeled, and fell to the pavement, as she murmured :

“ *Mes pauvres enfants !*”

She, who had been encouraging us all, had left three starving children at home, and had missed even one ration of food by a single forerunner. We rubbed her palms. One kindly female pressed a phial of *sal volatile* to her nostrils. A drop of brandy was fetched from the nearest *marchand de vins*, and by degrees she recovered. As soon as she was able to stand, the man of the sharp, saturnine countenance quietly slipped his ration of bread into her pocket.

“ Look what that little nincompoop has done !” said a burly rascal in broadcloth, who had obtained a ration immediately before him. “ Why, she only made believe ; she’s an impostor.”

"Rachel could not act disappointment like that," said I; "that is nature."

"Look what I have done! Yes, I have done what a man should do; and I say to you what I shall do when this siege is over. I shall shoot you like a pigeon—no, not like a pigeon; they carry our letters—I shall never shoot one again; but I shall shoot you like a bloated rat."

It was he of the sharp, saturnine countenance who spoke.

"You! you walking anatomy; and who, in the name of St. Denis, may you be?" said the big fellow in a blustering tone.

"I am——," and he mentioned the name of a celebrated duellist.

That portly individual ran away much more quickly than one might have anticipated from his want of condition; but he did not escape before he had been tripped up and his ration had been annexed for the benefit of the woman of the people.

For my own ration I was indebted that day to a dear, kindly old lady, a Mrs. Gammon, at the English restaurant in the Rue d'Amsterdam. She

noticed that I looked pale and faint, and slipped a large piece of bread into my hand in a hall just as I was dropping off into a swoon.

The clubs were seething anew, and the town, chafing at its humiliations and hardships, was riper now to hearken to the agitators than at any time since the 31st of October. Trochu's dismissal was advocated freely by some who had been among his warmest partisans. The Breton Mobiles garrisoned the Louvre and the Hôtel de Ville in preparation to repel an apprehended descent from the faubourgs. The quality of the bread, which was really not worse than should have been expected under the circumstances, excited discontent in the poor districts beyond all others. The aristocratic quarters had more fortitude. An orator from Belleville went so far as to assert that the Government was making the people eat the Butte Montmartre, basing his charge on the statement that there was a large proportion of fine sand in the small loaf. He was employing the figure of speech known as hyperbole, but he got vehement applause. The price of the daily ration was regulated at two sous, which was

rather under the ordinary value—five sous the pound. It was said to be composed of fifty per cent. of wheaten flour, thirty of rice, and twenty of oaten flour—when it was honestly composed. Very brown, palatable, and easy of digestion, I have eaten worse fare—but not often, and never for choice. O'Donovan and I wandered to and fro to warm ourselves and distract the hunger-fiend, and now and again picked up some street-incidents which were worthy to be pinned in a scrapbook of souvenirs of the siege.

On the Boulevard des Italiens, a boy was to be heard crying out splinters of shells for sale! "*Cinq sous le tas d'éclats d'obus.*" Twopence-halfpenny the lot; going off a dead bargain! He had a basket of his ware at his feet. I examined some of them. They were harmless bits of rusty metal, the sweepings of a smithy. The idea was ingenious, but not new; Nivelles had been drawing profit out of the manufacture of genuine relics of the battle of Waterloo for over half a century.

"*Allez!*" said a strong-minded female passing; "we shall have them wholesale for nothing one of these days—*espérons!*"

A little beyond this merchant in miniature, was planted against the wall a country girl with a rabbit in a box before her. "*Combien le lapin, ma fille ?*" inquired a passer-by.

"Forty francs, monsieur," was the ready answer.

"Humph ! it's a pretty rabbit—as pretty as the damsel that owns it."

"Buy it, monsieur ; it is a fine large one."

"So is the price, *ma petite* ; good-day !"

Farther on, I saw a live turkey hawked on the footpath for the ridiculously high sum of two hundred francs.

The bombardment of St. Denis (without previous notice, *more Borussorum*) commenced on the 21st, at a quarter to nine in the morning, and the rumbling of the cannon was borne to us like low thunder-peals over the heights of Montmartre. In the suburb itself there was what the poet Gray would call an "iron sleet of arrowy shower." Five shells, I learned, fell on the cathedral in whose vaults repose the kings of France. The natives had to dive for safety to the cellars. Little damage was done to the forts. The bombardment of the forts on

the east and the line of defences on the south and the city between them and the Seine always continued. Twenty civilians, principally women and children, were slaughtered on the night of the 20th, and as satisfaction to-day we succeeded in sending a Prussian powder-magazine on the plateau of Châtillon sky-high.

On the 22nd, Fabius Cunctator was virtually deposed (at his own particular request, I do conceive). A note appeared in the *Official* appointing Vinoy commander-in-chief, and making an easy bed for Trochu to fall upon by leaving him in the exercise of his functions as President of the Government. Thus subsided the gentle Dictator, our methodical General of compass and square. Vinoy was clever and not too unlucky; his masterly retreat from Mézières had endowed the capital with the nucleus of its defensive army; but he should combine the stuff of Alexander and Hannibal, and have a whole constellation of lucky stars to himself, to alter the complexion of matters now. The thinnest slice of success would be as grateful as manna in the wilderness. Alas! the fatal phrase would recur—"Too

late!" What if Vinoy were a man of action, and no partisan of Trochu's plan of treating the garrison like a London chambermaid, and allowing it "a day's outing once a month"? What if he would scorn to pen such a despatch as, "We combat in the night"? Heenan, the pugilist, made a good fight after his eyes had been bunged up, but Paganini himself could not make music without a fiddle. That he was not animated with any confidence in the issue was patent from his Order of the Day on assuming office. He recognised the responsibility as weighty, and the position as perilous, but he did not hesitate to accept it. He let a warning against illusions escape, and finished by affirming that he was a soldier, and would be a soldier to the end, convinced that the Army, the Mobile, and the National Guard would be with him in his task of maintaining order and the public safety. But not a word did he say of disembarassing the city from the hug of the Germans. He knew it could not be done. The previsions of disturbance were realized to an extent in the small hours of the night before we heard of Vinoy's appointment. Some six hundred of the



National Guards of Belleville presented themselves before the gates of the Mazas gaol, where eighteen prisoners of State were detained for agitations in favour of the Commune. The post was guarded by seventy-five men, a company of the 6th battalion of the civic force. They foolishly allowed three armed delegates to enter to parley. The instant the latter got in they discharged their rifles, and the men on duty opening the gates to expel them, the armed mob outside made an irruption, and M. Bayer, the governor (a nominee of the 4th of September), enlarged the interesting political captives, Flourens, the foremost, merely demanding a receipt for their bodies. The band of prison-breakers then proceeded to the Mairie of the 20th arrondissement, which they seized on, did away with 2,000 rations of bread and a barrel of wine, and made themselves at home generally. But notice having been conveyed to the Government of what was going on, Citizen Flourens, the commander-in-chief, considering that his men were not in force, prudently evacuated the stronghold. In the forenoon of the 22nd General Clément Thomas sent out

a proclamation telling the story, and appealing to the National Guard to hold themselves ready at the first summons to repress the criminal enterprise of those who would cause disunion from within while the enemy was bombarding the city from without. His words were prescient. In spite of the knowledge that the Provisional Government was prepared for attack, and in direct defiance of the rudimentary dictates of patriotism and good sense, the play rehearsed on the 31st of October, 1870, was repeated. It was a farce then, a tragedy now. About three o'clock the space before the Hôtel de Ville was blocked with brawling malcontents, women and children. Suddenly arrived some hundred and odd National Guards, drums at their head, from the direction of the Rue de Rivoli. They drew up to the right of the building, which was held by a detachment of the Mobiles of Finisterre, and entered on a palaver, which ended in the selection of a deputation, of which M. Tony Révillon, a writer on the *Petite Presse*, and a Republican of the stamp of Lyons (of which he was a native), was chief. None of the members of the Government were in the town-

house to receive it. They were in deliberation at the Ministry of the Interior. M. Chaudey, an assistant-deputy-mayor, or something of the sort, did the honours. Arrived a second deputation—this assuming to represent the twenty arrondissements of Paris. The deputations were shown out dissatisfied.

There was a thrill in the crowd, the shiver which presages a fit, as the dissatisfied delegates told how they had been treated.

At this moment the 101st battalion of the National Guard defiled on the Place and marched towards the principal gate of the Hôtel de Ville, amid cries of "To arms! Down with the traitors!" There was a surging to and fro, a shuffling of feet, clamour and excitement in the bounding, heated, bobbing-up-and-down throng. Crack! A shot was fired. Who fired it? Nobody could say for certain; but that shot told, and Adjutant Bertrand, of the Mobiles of Finisterre, standing between the gate of the Hôtel de Ville and the outer railing, threw up his hands and sunk, wounded by a French bullet. There was the peremptory command,

"Fire!" and a volley swept from the levelled rifles of the guardians of the town-house, the wounded officer's comrades. Panic seized on those on the Square: women and children fled, fourteen bodies rested like bundles on the ground, the dead or maimed. Two rose and ran off—frightened, perhaps, not more. Then from the angles of the Square, and from the windows of the houses opposite, opened a fire of bullets, explosible balls, and small bombs on the Hôtel de Ville. It lasted nigh half an hour, when a shout was heard. Up charged the reinforcements of order, a battalion of the Mobiles of Vendée, a squadron of the Mounted Gendarmes, and some loyal National Guards, and the firing ceased.

The insurgents drew off, overpowered by numbers. They overturned five omnibuses at the angle of the Boulevard de Sebastopol and the Rue de Rivoli, to make a barricade, which helped to cover their retreat, thus showing more military aptitude in fighting their own countrymen than in driving off the Prussians. But the town was not yet ripe to fulness for their seditious broils, and preferred the

Government such as it was to one of their patching. The well-disposed National Guards answered in thousands to the *rappel*, and massed in column in the neighbourhood of the Hôtel de Ville. At eight o'clock calm was restored, but lives had been lost. Belleville was worsted again, but not stamped out; the snake was scotched, not killed.

When the haze that enveloped this dastardly attempt at an uprising began to dispel, the feebleness of the so-called party of action, as confronted with the reasoning masses, when these masses have the energy to show themselves in arms, was proven beyond denial. The helots of Sparta were forbidden to assemble lest they should learn their strength and pluck up courage to overwhelm their masters. The lovers of order in Paris, at any time, have but to come together to see that they are strong enough to fling off the incubus of unrighteous Revolution. The foolish devotees of that clay-footed idol, the Commune, were but the minority of three ignorant outlying wards, Belleville, Montmartre and Popincourt. At the funeral of Colonel Rochebrune they made rendezvous to liberate Flourens, who was to

engineer their insurrection. Flourens, the madcap son of a worthy savant, was the Catiline of the conspiracy ; but he did not appear on the scene of their last venture. He reserved himself for greater things. His henchman, the dissolute crackbrain, Sapia, was the active leader. He was reported to have been slain. Thirty-seven prisoners were taken, and some of them, it was said, were Germans. Amongst the victims of the riot were a captain of the National Guard, a doctor, an old gentleman who was looking on at a distance through a pocket-telescope, and sundry women and children. The Governor of Mazas was arrested. Vinoy, who was no Republican, and hated sedition-mongers, was equal to keeping the town quiet—if he were permitted. On the 31st of October, he wrote to Trochu : “My troops are ready ; let me unleash them, and we shall soon have finished with the Prussians of Paris.”

The identical Republican leaders who found a forcible argument against the Empire, in that it durst not grant liberty to France—that is, to Paris—were obliged on the 23rd to suppress the clubs,

*id est*, the right of public meeting, till the close of the siege, and suspend the publication of two journals—the *Réveil*, edited by Delescluze, ex-mayor of the 19th arrondissement, and the *Combat*, conducted by Pyat, the melodramatist. That tyrant, Napoleon III., could not have done worse than to muzzle independent speech and a free press! At last they began to admit that Paris does not understand liberty—is not prepared for it—translates it licence. The exasperation among the lower classes to-day—scant bread aiding—was extreme. The Communists said that Vinoy did what “Badinguet” would have avoided—fired on the people. Why did he not break their backs with knuckle-dusters? That was how the trick was done in the June riots of '69. They pretended, too, that former *sergents de ville* were disguised as Mobiles, and fired on the citizens; and that St. Denis was expected to have marched on the Hôtel de Ville—would have done so, indeed, were it not for the bombardment. If our gentle Dictator had guillotined Gustave Flourens on the morning of the 1st of November, there would not have been bloodshed on the Square in front of the

Hôtel de Ville. The authorities could hardly execute the persons arrested for this last outrage, though they doubled the number of permanent courts-martial; for the insane mismanagement of the past six weeks had lent it an excuse which the turbulence of the 31st of October did not possess.

The latest military report signalized great activity on the part of the besiegers to the north. They were pushing their lines towards St. Denis, and cannonading the ancient burgh with untiring vigour. Their attack was principally directed on the fort of Briche, which had to sustain the cross-fire of six batteries. Two pieces of twenty-four and one of twelve were dismounted there. The Mobiles were removed from the works of St. Denis, their services being no longer necessary to the defence; the prison, demolished in part, was evacuated; and the inhabitants who remained in the town were warned to remove at once to Paris—a warning they were not slow to accept. An entire family was destroyed by a bursting shell on the first day of the bombardment, and twenty-one persons killed and as many wounded on the night between the



21st and 22nd. The place was no longer habitable; several houses tumbled under the shock of projectiles; a pasteboard-factory was completely destroyed by fire, and the massive walls of the cathedral were continuously hammered and dented by shot and sugar-loaf bomb. Nothing was sacred to the enemy; he made war as war should be made, in a workman-like manner—that is to say, barbarously. The bombardment of the Paris forts slackened somewhat; Issy had suffered considerably, but not seriously; the south side of Nogent also had been actively cannonaded, and a battery had been unmasked on the Lyons railway in preparation to open on Charenton.

Amid all this vapour of sulphur and blood and din of Erebus there was a stoic composure in the beleaguered city, outside the circle of those who are noisy always and under every circumstance. The population bore its sufferings with constancy, but it was plain that the strain was too tense to last much longer. One might hint at the possibility of capitulation without being denounced as a traitor. Murmurs were universal against the indecision of

the Generals and the incompetency of the Intendance; people said with fair reason, "On the 4th of September we changed the form of Government, but not the system of administration." Still everything went on with a comparative quietude that was creditable.

We pause in admiration at the page in Roman history where we read of the senators sitting like statues in the Forum to the last, the moment when the Gaul entered and plucked them by the beards. Is not this an incident cut from the same block of heroism, and equally deserving of historic record? During a lecture on history in the College of France, a shell entered and exploded. Levasseur, the professor, looked around, saw that nobody was hurt, and quietly said, "If it does not incommode you, messieurs, we shall continue!" Not a person left the room. The Academy of Sciences still held its sittings, and discussed *aërolites*, and meteors, and shooting-stars as placidly as if other phenomena were not glistening in the firmament around. At one *séance*, a vote of condolence was passed to the father of the great painter, killed in the *sortie* of despair.

Regnault *père* was director of the porcelain factory at Sèvres, but had to retire at the opening of the siege, and left thence for Versailles. The remains of his son were not recovered, but there could be no doubt of his death. He was seen, cold and rigid, prostrate on his face, which was turned to the soil. On the lining of his chocolate-hued capote was found sewn a card with his name and address. While the ambulancier who happened on the spot was away looking for a stretcher the body disappeared. But he was honoured with a funeral all the same, an unclaimed corpse of some comrade-victim of Buzenval occupying the coffin for the occasion.

O'Donovan and I were standing in front of the Madeleine, where a hearse was in waiting. By-and-by a humble coffin was carried out and placed in it. Two provincial Mobiles were beside us.

"Whose funeral is that?" asked one.

"Gustave Lambert's, killed in the sortie of the 19th," answered the undertaker's man.

He had been a sergeant in the 114th of the Line, and his regiment had not sent even a corporal's guard to render him the last compliments.

"I heard him deliver a lecture once in my town," said the Mobile; "I shall follow his remains a part of the way." The pair of strangers joined in the procession of four, and as poor Lambert was carried silently to the grave, snow came swirling down, and covered the vehicle with flakes. Nature had supplied the Arctic explorer with a fitting shroud.

On our return we took the Louvre, and caught a pair of urchins lying in wait with a sling for the birds that had nests under the cornices. They were but following the example of their elders, who cracked at the feathered creation in the Champs Elysées. I called at Blount's\* banking-house to ask for money, and saw Mr. Mount, the urbane manager, who had manfully remained at his desk. He looked delicate and downcast. As he gave me a note for one hundred francs, he assured me that that pittance was all he could spare; their coffers were nearly empty (I hardly credited this, but I afterwards knew it was literally correct), as the principal had been acting as British diplomatic

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\* Mr. Blount was made a C.B. Men with less deserts have got loftier rewards.

representative, and had to meet the funds required to keep hundreds of necessitous fellow-subjects alive. "If this does not end very, very soon," added Mr. Mount, "I do not know how a frightful calamity will be averted. There will be thousands of deaths from hunger." I rejoined O'Donovan, and we both moved moodily off to my domicile, where we began smoking while we pondered over what was to be done. If our resources did not last, we should have to join a corps. Better death fighting for a foreign cause than death by starvation. So vigorously did we puff that the atmosphere grew opaque, and I opened the window, cold though the day was. Our ingenious little postal balance, which my friend had patiently framed, was on the ledge. A perky sparrow flew down, alighted on the sill, hopped boldly in, and jerked his tiny head inquisitively to and fro. He was on a foraging expedition. We watched him intently in silence. He saw the bits of hard dough, pecked experimentally at one, and, apparently finding it was good, chirruped and abruptly flew away with it in his bill. A simultaneous "Oh!" broke from us, and our eyes met.

“Why did you not stop him?” said I reproachfully.

“For the same reason that you did not,” answered O’Donovan.

And we both laughed. We had lost one of our most useful weights, but the feathered raider was welcome. He, too, felt the pangs of appetite; he had taught us a lesson of philosophy, and we arrived at the conclusion that the same Providence which had unexpectedly furnished the winged vagabond with a meal would come to our assistance.

Had we known but all! At the very moment we were mentally peering into the Cave of Trophonius, an assent from Bismarck to a request from Jules Favre, for an interview to arrange the preliminaries of an armistice, was on its way from Versailles.

Why should I loiter over what followed—the continued bombardment; the flight of the population of St. Denis into Paris; the multiplying funerals; the increasing dearth; the surmises of those who yearned for peace; the scowls of the

baffled Bellevillites ; the uncanny silence at the stroke of midnight on the 26th of January ; and the stupor, not unmixed with a wide, ill-dissembled relief, when Paris was informed that the last shot had been fired. Negotiations were on foot. All was over but the signing, sealing, and delivering. The terms of the armistice, transparent euphuism for capitulation, were briefly these:—that the Germans should occupy the forts and take over the material of war ; that the cannon should be removed from the enceinte and the garrison disarmed, except the National Guard and an army division retained for the preservation of internal order. On the 29th, the conditions were officially made known ; the troops, mostly without arms, re-entered the city—a long disorderly stream of demoralization in uniform ; and de Larret Lamagnie, a naval captain at Montrouge, not caring to survive the surrender of a fort he had gallantly defended, retired with a set frown on his downcast face to a quiet corner and blew out his brains.

The armistice meant revictualment, re-opening of communications with the world, and freedom to

elect a National Assembly—peace, in short ; but it also meant a triumphal entry of the invader into the capital, payment of a monster indemnity, and the loss of two fair provinces.

Yes ; all was ended. The cup of gall was full to the brim and flowing over. The curtain might indeed be rung down. The last act closed in gloom, where the first was heralded with exultant overtures and the exhilarant tumult of the mob of Parisian citizens—those indispensable supernumeraries in all the great political dramas of France. I remember having stood on the open space by the Seine, opposite the Palace of the Legislative Body, on that sunny day six months before, when war was proclaimed against the King who had dared to slight our ambassador. There was joy and shouting. A student of the Polytechnic, whom I had never seen before, shook both my hands in the expansion of his enthusiasm. Paris was pleased. Sadowa was about to be avenged at last—insupportable, sir, that Prussia should try to hector it over Europe ; we are the military nation : this war should come sooner or later ; better have the quarrel settled at



once. Heaven help me! I didn't see the cause for quarrel. Down about the cafés near the barracks of the Prince Eugène there were high jinks; for the officers, who were vegetating on the wretched pay of the soldier in this martial land, consoling themselves for the promotion that would not come over sickening absinthe and interminable dominoes, saw gold epaulettes and the red ribbon at the end of the vista. At night there was animation on the boulevards; crowds sang the "Marseillaise," and cries of "À Berlin!" were ten times repeated. When a group of students from the Latin Quarter ventured to raise their voices for peace, they were elbowed and hustled to the shout of "Down with the bleaters!" War was never so popular. Let what may be said, Napoleon had no alternative but war or revolution, and the state of public feeling was the proof.

An apocryphal gentleman laid a monster wager in *Figaro* that our army would camp on the Unter den Linden before the Emperor's *fête*. Emile de Girardin danced with delight; his eyes glistened from behind his concave glasses, for the one idea

of his latter career was about to be realized ; we were to have our frontier of the Rhine. Thiers, it is true, had hinted that the moment was badly chosen ; but Thiers was a good-for-naught, a political intriguer, and the sovereign people assembled under his windows and yelled that he was "sold to Prussia." Were we prepared for the war ? Of course we were. Had not the Duke de Grammont, with his fist of iron, punctuated his defiance to Prussia on the desk before him ? Had not the enlightened Marshal Le Bœuf declared in council that not even a button for the gaiters of the soldiers would be wanting ? And those poor ignorant soldiers—the pawns that were to be moved about at will on the board in this game of life and death—were they satisfied ? "We are all content," answered one peasant-boy of the 62nd to me as his regiment was departing from the Eastern Railway Station ; "*nous allons voir des pays.*"

Six weeks passed. French soldiers were at Berlin—but prisoners ! Le Bœuf's boast about the buttons was verified ; they were not wanting, because there were no gaiters to sew them on !

Douay had been surprised at Wissemburg, MacMahon had been beaten at Wörth, and de Failly at Forbach; the onward march into Germany, for which thousands of requisitions in the German language had been prepared, was checked before it began; the Grand Army was thrown upon the defensive. Still there was hope that the fortune would change. There were fresh troops at Chalons; there was the line of strong places from Belfort to Thionville; and Bazaine, with the Guard, was intact. Paris was confounded, but did not despair. All would yet turn out right. Came Gravelotte and Sedan—"unmerciful disaster followed fast and faster." The Emperor was a prisoner: "Down with the Emperor—it was he who led us into this war!" Those who appealed in favour of peace were right; the war demonstrationists were the paid creatures of Imperialism. And the sovereign people being logical, the Republic was proclaimed, and the control of the defence of the entire country confided to the deputies of one city. The provinces not having been consulted, the first act of the new Government, naturally, was to summon the young men of the

provinces to the assistance of Paris. The military command of the capital (fortified by that Thiers "sold to Prussia" a short six weeks previously) was handed over to a General named by the de-throned Emperor, and reputed to be an Orleanist at heart, but who had no scruple in taking off his cocked-hat and making his *ko-tow* to the Republic, the idol of the moment. Jules Favre (an avowed Republican of long standing, at least he) went to Ferrières, and, with tears in his eyes, tried to move Count Bismarck to peace. But Count Bismarck was stone; he had the winning cards in his hands, and refused to accede to terms which any man of spirit could accept. Jules Favre returned from his interview, related it, and wrote those proud lines as the ultimatum of the new Government, "Neither an inch of our territory, nor a stone of our fortresses."

Paris was invested. How it was defended has been described. It fell—last crowning act of shame in the most shameful tragedy the world ever saw. The war ended where it began. Paris that went into it with *cœur léger*, like Emile Ollivier, was sullen as a lashed hyena, and snarled at those

it had been forced to take as keepers. Their guardianship had led it to a strait pass : commercial stagnation, physical prostration, lowering of prestige, and a legacy of civil dissensions. For once the people was sound, taught by misfortune, and cried, "Down with this false and fraudulent Government of National Defence, this cabinet of hap-hazard, government of national surrender and humiliation!" The Third Republic is a timid imitation of the First—as pale and scentless as a flower of wax beside the posy of the fields. Instead of Carnot, we have had Jules Ferry ; instead of Saint Just, Ernest Picard ; and instead of the General Bonaparte that crossed the Alps, the General Trochu that recrossed the Marne.

"Ah ! we are sold," shrieked the people—no longer sovereign—and with more justice than after Sedan. Not a month ago our Commander-in-chief wrote, "The Governor of Paris will never capitulate." Nor has he ; he is an honest man, and has found means to evade the violation of his pledge in ceasing to be Governor ; but that which the Governor promised not to do, the Government has done. The

Convention was negotiated by Jules Favre, and to-day Mont Valérien was in the hands of the invader. "Not a stone of our fortresses !" What a comment on the haughty declaration ! We were told there was not bread to feed Paris till the 3rd of February, and that we had to surrender to famine. What did our government of rhetoricians do to avert famine ? Magnin, the Minister of Agriculture, offered a premium of 25 francs to common informers, which public indignation obliged him to withdraw the following day ; communications were cut on the 15th of September ; horse-meat was not rationed till the 15th of December, bread till the 20th current. Attorney Ferry, so stern a critic for the Prefect Haussmann, who had a head for organization in any case, managed so that decent poverty was forced to become a burden on the municipality. I met a mother of a family in the queue before the bakery the other morning.

"Sir," she said, "I have to wait here for hours for my bread ; I have to wait again for my scrap of meat ; I have to go to the Mairie and join the end of the queue to look for my ticket for wood ; and

then I have to make a journey to the shed to present it. My whole day is broken in upon; how can I work? I must placard myself 'pauper'!"

In the entire cabinet there was but one good Minister, Dorian—that because he was a practical man, a man of business. The rest were phrasers and praters.

Alas for the shame of it, Paris has fallen! but Paris at least did its duty, and its Government did not. Trochu has much to answer for—Trochu who prefaced every tardy sortie by a proclamation to the enemy to be on his guard, as the Prince Eugène opened his trenches at Lerida to the music of viols!

Thus reasoned and thus spoke Paris hysterically, unjustly at times mayhap, but with egotism excusable. Poor Paris! Unhappy France! Accursed war!

## CHAPTER X.

Reflections—An Estimate of Trochu—Wanted, an Autocrat—Fatal Procrastinations—The Famous Plan—Dignity of the Workmen—The Sleek and Shabby Bourgeois—Swallowing the Leek—Proclamation of the German Kaiser—The King's Grenadiers—A Gallery of Princes—A Historic Scene—A Stolid Prussian Sentry—Chaffering with the Enemy—The German Barrier towards St. Denis—Anecdotes—British Visitors—Running the Blockade—Worship of Isis—A Wild Gallop—The German Patrol—Versailles.

AFTER the excitements of eighteen weeks there was a reaction. The cessation of cannon-music set us thinking. If the thoughts of others may be appraised by those which beset me, they were gloomy—aye, as gloomy as those which *will* rise around the pillow of a man who cannot sleep through the long watches of a winter's night. The war and its sieges, particularly this, had been grievous ordeal for France. Still they would not be without their



compensations if they taught the country — first, to beware of idolizing military glory; next, to abandon the system of centralization, which leaves the legislative chamber at the mercy of an unruly rabble; and, lastly, to repair the error of having made a commercial capital a *place de guerre*.

Had I my will, I would raze the fortifications of Paris; but before that I would deprive them of the excuse for existence by putting a period to the political dictatorship of the city, and transferring the law-making machinery elsewhere. The Americans act wisely in locating their seat of government at a distance from any mercantile or industrial centre. Seneca is right: *Male imperatur cum regit vulgus duces*. That commonwealth cannot be prudently or properly governed where the mob may impose its cantrips upon the men of mind, experience, and social standing—the true *duces*.

With the close of the siege, Trochu may be said to disappear from the theatre of prominent active life. He was a good General—did his business calmly and methodically, and persevered with it. Fifty others would have done the same business

just as well with half the waste of printer's ink on proclamations. He was no genius ; but while he had not the originality to risk a blunder, he had the weakness to authorize a crime. That sortie of the 19th of January was an indisputable crime ; and Trochu, who must have known how hopeless it was, stands arraigned before the bar of history for having caused the wanton effusion of human blood on both sides. The true commander never squanders his men ; where a point is to be gained, he will send his legions to certain destruction without hesitation, as Picton hurled his fighting 3rd Division into the trenches of Badajos ; where a danger is to be averted, he will make free sacrifice, as Benedek did of his superb Hungarian cavalry to cover the retreat at Königgrätz ; but he will shrink from the objectless loss of the smallest drummer-boy. That onset towards the impregnable German lines to the west never had the ghost of a promise of success. If it had, Trochu would have been justified in lavishing one hundred thousand lives in the attempt ; as it was, to have committed one to the hazard was homicidal.

There was no possibility of deblocking Paris before the 31st of October—the forces did not exist inside ; nor was there much shortly after the fall of Metz ; the Germans were too strong and too solidly established. Still there were many who were of opinion that the first Napoleon, with his daring aggressiveness, might have ruptured the bonds. What Paris wanted was an autocrat—prescient, stern, unscrupulous—one who would have expelled all useless mouths instead of decreeing their expulsion ; who would have rationed the population from the very first day ; who would have searched for and confiscated all concealed provisions ; who would have cut down the woods in the environs before the enemy came, instead of having talked about burning them down after he had arrived ; who would have organized companies of spies among the peasants of the country round, and have paid them well ; who would have sown the ring of villages outside the range of the forts with torpedoes, to be fired by electricity ; who would have suppressed Châtillon scares by drum-head courts-martial, and corrected laxity of discipline in the

National Guard by a pitiless severity. In fine, Paris demanded one who would have done as Davoust did at Hamburg in 1813, and Paris got a pious Breton, fond of Tacitus and his pipe, and skilled in the embroidery of sound. Trochu did much, but he left more undone ; he was guilty of unpardonable procrastinations. For example, he did not mobilize the citizen soldiery till the middle of November ; he did not send out his troops with entrenching-tools before the 20th of December, when it was too late ; he never tried a single night-surprise ; and he turned the little fleet of passenger-steamers on the Seine, by which fifteen thousand men could be transported from St. Cloud to Choisy-le-Roi in three hours, to no further advantage than the occasional conveyance of the wounded. It was extraordinary — indeed, it was inexplicable — what slender profit was derived from the situation of the beleaguered city, with its easy communications from north to south, from east to west. There never was more tempting chance for acting on interior lines, for perplexing and worrying a foeman distributed over an immense periphery, by perpetual threat

and quick changes of the front of attack. But Trochu either did not see the chance or neglected it. The famous plan, of which we had been hearing to nausea, will never be fully or frankly disclosed. Many doubted that he ever had a plan; some questioned his capacity to carry out any plan to a prosperous issue. Cogitating over the *pros* and *cons* of escape from the toils, as everybody did, it struck me that there was a solitary mode of helping ourselves to relief, and that was of the wildest. It was to have despatched commissioners by balloon, charged to buy up and gather herds of cattle at the nearest points outside the Germans, on the lines of railway to the west, north, and south. On a certain day to make three strong sorties, two of which were feints, nevertheless, but might be made serious if possible success crowned them. To push on one, at least, at any sacrifice; to support it by reinforcements; to wrest a line of rails from the enemy, make this a base, even if the French were only able to command a couple of kilometres on either side for the necessary days—two or three—to bring in the cattle by this gap, and leave a field-army outside to

stir up the provinces and harry the connection of the Germans with their dépôts.

It would be a ridiculous affectation to pretend that Paris was not secretly pleased that the strife was coming to a close, although Paris considered it correct to make efforts to dissemble its pleasure. There was nothing more natural in the world. London would have felt as if a load were lifted off its shoulders under similar circumstances; and the British capital, I make bold to assert, could hardly have gone through the purgatory so well—certainly not better. The prevalence of sickness and of poverty should be kept in mind; these do not conduce to brave resignation, however the humanitarian theorists may mouth. In my experience, the sick man is disposed to be querulous; the poor man to be captious. Arms were in nearly all hands, except those of the police; the streets were badly lit, and almost deserted from sunset to dawn. What might have been done in a dim Islington or a lonely Whitechapel, unpatrolled by stalwart constables with truncheons, will not bear to be reflected upon. Yet the attitude of the

working population of Paris was noble, dignified, and self-contained beyond expectation, and merited unstinted praise. Outside the ranks of a brawling fag-end of a faction, there was no disorder; bread-riots were unknown; robbery and assaults were under the average. Property and life were never more secure. The solitary grave reproach that could be made against this sorely proved community was one which should not hastily be advanced by a native of London, nor yet of Glasgow. There was a notable increase in the consumption of liquor. So much to the credit of the workmen of Paris. The like tribute could not be paid to the more comfortable classes composing the bourgeoisie. They had less to bear, and bore it less patiently. Some of them lacked none of the necessities of existence, and few of its luxuries, until the term of the rationing of the bread; and even then, if they had to cavil at the colour and quality of the staff of life, they had only to open the larder to have their eyes and palate refreshed. Without passing the limits where exaggeration begins, it might be asserted that there were fifty thousand

plump burgesses who did not waste ten pounds of flesh from the date when communications were closed to the signing of the Convention. They had to pay more for their creature comforts, assuredly ; but they were prepared to have them at any price, and made up for the *cochonnerie* they were obliged to eat—interesting sufferers!—by thick wedges of preserved meats and copious draughts of fine wines. If their gustatory niceness did not permit them to deal at the establishment that recommended itself by the motto, “Legality and Salubrity”—I mean the canine and feline butchery—they had only to go to Chevet’s, in the Palais Royal, to get well-conditioned rabbit and pullet, or to the *Boucherie Anglaise*, in the Faubourg St. Honoré, to try their teeth on antelope or ostrich. But those who had the direst sufferings to undergo were not the destitute, for charity took them under its wing (upwards of four hundred thousand free meals, for instance, had been distributed in the Ninth Arrondissement, in the month of December); nor yet the artisans, for they had their thirty sous a day in the National Guard, when they had nothing else ; but the small



annuitants and the *petits employés*, whose fixed salaries had stopped, who were too proud to beg, and had no credit at the restaurant. They did suffer, and terribly, especially during the excessive cold; and they did not complain, but died.

News trickled in from the outer world; but it was not news to bring the flush of pride to the brow of the besieged. France was overridden and crushed; Bourbaki had attempted suicide; there were no armies afoot; the same tale of defeat was current everywhere; nothing was left for the once-braggart nation but to swallow the leek with as good a grace as it could assume. There was a cut unkinder still—one of the “most unkindest” on record. On the 18th of January, William I. of Prussia had been proclaimed German Emperor,\* at Versailles, in the very residence of

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\* People will call the German Emperor Emperor of Germany—an error as great as to speak of a King of Belgium or of the late Louis Napoleon as Emperor of France. The mistake was even made in the Queen’s Speech at opening Parliament on the 6th of February, 1873, where her Majesty, treating of the discussion about the possession of the Island of Saint Juan, alluded to “My ally, the Emperor of Germany.” The first proofs of that speech had to be cancelled.

the proudest of the Bourbons. While Paris, famished and fevered, was preparing for the last despairing sortie, the chief of the invaders was hailed Kaiser of the Teutons in the ancient royal seat of France. The time and place of this gala ceremonial could not well have been more humiliating to the French, more flattering to their conquerors. The pageant, which was conspicuously a military one, had been carried out in the Gallery of Mirrors of the palace of Louis XIV.—Louis the Great, Louis the God-given. The 7th, or King's, Grenadier Regiment formed the guard of etiquette in the courtyard, and presented arms to the long procession of dignitaries in state uniforms as they arrived. By noon there must have been eighteen hundred persons and personages gathered in the hall set apart for the solemn act, which was the realization of the high and cherished dream of the German professors of Forty-eight. There was befitting living framework to the historic picture. The throng was glittering in epaulette and buckle, scabbard and spur, and helmet hand-gripped, with here and there a dazzle of much-gilt garment. There

were officials in scarlet, blue and black, with the furs and gauds of luxury, and the plain tokens of valour; warriors and chamberlains, diplomatists and men of action, nobles and roturiers, votaries of pen and sword; those who had made their mark in the study and in the camp, and those who were merely ornamental, and formed part of the furniture of anterooms. They were there from almost all quarters of the land which Arndt had voiced in song—from the Rhine provinces, Swabia, Holstein, where the kine browse knee-deep in the marshes, and the shores of the Belt, where the sea-mews swoop—all knit in a single cause, met with the same object. An altar had been built at one extremity, and on a daïs near it were placed a throne for the king and chairs for the princes. Beside it was stationed a choir, composed of the bandsmen of the Grenadiers and of the 59th of the Line, the contingents raised at Liegnitz and Glogau. These gallant sons of Silesia had the honours of the festival, and richly they had earned them. If they were foremost in the pompous show, so also were they in the opening battle of the war when Voigts-Rhetz, with his tall

soldiers, pressed steadily up the steep heights of the Geisberg in the face of a perfect hail of death. These Liegnitz men bethought them of the brave deeds of their fathers who had beaten back the French with bayonet-prods and the smiting of musket-butts in 1813, and had given Blücher his title of Prince of Wahlstadt. The bullet-riddled flag of the King's Grenadiers hung aloft in companionship with those of von Rheinhaben's cavalry, the devoted troopers who had flung themselves into the gap of danger at Vionville, and had saved the day when its fate was trembling in the balance. At the stroke of twelve, punctual as if he were valet, not master, the king entered to the salvo of three trumpet-blasts. He wore a general's parade-uniform, and was decorated with the ribbon of the Black Eagle. The troops lining his path greeted him with loud and repeated *hochs*.

It must have been a grand, a moving scene—for a German. The aged monarch was attended by his son, and the Princes Charles and Adalbert of Prussia, Luitpold of Bavaria, Otho, the Bavarian King's brother, the Grand-Dukes of Baden, Saxe-

Weimar and Oldenburg, the Dukes of Coburg, Meiningen and Altenburg, the Princes William and Augustus, and the Dukes Eugène, father and son, of Würtemberg—a galaxy of hereditary Grand-Dukes and *Duodezprinzen*, and greater than any or all of their titular mightinesses—as gold is greater than tinsel, sunlight than the glare of gas—Bismarck and von Moltke. Bismarck was to the King's right; von Moltke to his left. William I. planted himself on the throne. Can that have been a piece of French upholstery which did duty? Divine service was begun, and the hymn, *Jauchzet dem Herrn, alle Welt*, was sung with a sonorous smoothness and deep impressiveness. "Rejoice in the Lord, *all* the world!" And France, writhing at the feet of the victor, was she bidden to the jubilee? The irony was too bitter. But the choir did not stop to think of that; it sang on, that warrior-choir which may have been dodging shell-splinters in the trenches a few nights before, may be shouting hoarse defiance to-morrow to those who were arranging a sally from Paris even as the harmony of devotional praise went upwards. Pastor Rogge,

an army chaplain, with the Iron Cross upon his breast, delivered a sermon in which he did not fail to remind his auditory that it was within those walls Louis XIV. had conceived the plan of degrading Germany. "Have we not a guarantee at last," said the preacher, "that those days have vanished to return no more?" And then swelling into prophecy, he added, "Under the guidance of the Hohenzollerns, who have always taken up arms for the happiness of the Fatherland, and not for dynastic interests, a Germany grandiose and powerful will arise." William of Prussia ordering an escort of the First Footguards, the *corps d'élite* of Potsdam, to accompany him, stepped forward a few paces, and in a strong voice declared himself ready to accept the crown of German Emperor, and prayed the Federal Chancellor to read the proclamation to that effect, addressed to the German people. Bismarck complied. As he finished his task the Grand-Duke of Baden cried, "Live his Majesty the Emperor William!" The assembly was electrified at the appeal, and burst into an enthusiastic shout which made the windows rattle in their frames,

and the roof ring again. The Crown-Prince bent one knee, but the Emperor caught him in his arms, and kissed him on both cheeks. He next embraced the other members of his family, and then the religious portion of the ceremonial merged itself into the civic and courtly, and the Kaiser held his first *levée*. Very gracious his Imperial Majesty was, for he was gratified, and chatted with those who wore the Iron Cross of the first class, and condescended to notice private soldiers. At half-past one all was over, and the troops outside gave a loud *vivat* to their august hero and generalissimo as he returned to his quarters in the Avenue de Paris. Of course, though this was not mentioned, the leading characters in the memorable drama paid tribute to Adephegia. That is always done. Great Gargantua, how they must have feasted on roast and boiled, and quaffed bumpers of the foamy white vintage, and laughed what time we were shivering and starving a few miles away!

This we learned from the account in the German official organ, which was carefully shoved under the inspection of French eyes, and this the journalists

who had been screeching and spluttering fire and fury for months had the mortification to translate into fluent French and submit to their readers.

Paris took the report quietly. It was anxious about the revictualling and the elections, but admirably controlled its curiosity to approach those men-at-arms who were garrisoning Mont Valérien and the girdle of forts. There being no restraining motive in my case, I made excursions outside the ramparts to breathe a freer air and get a nearer glimpse at the Germans. By a clause in the Convention, the terrain between the enceinte and the line occupied by the invaders was forbidden to armed men on both sides. The gates in the ramparts were open between six in the morning and the same hour in the evening; but warning was given that none would be let beyond the enemy's sentries unless provided with regular passes from the French military authorities, which were to be submitted to the visa of the German fore-posts. These passes and visas were to be given as a matter of right to deputies to the Assembly and candidates for provincial constituencies. Similar



precautions were exercised by the German authorities. I did not go to the trouble of intriguing for a pass ; but when the hankering to get out became irresistible, I depended on that luck which has so often stood me in good stead, and succeeded in crossing and recrossing the guarded border as I shall explain further on. My first sortie was made by the gate of St. Ouen. I was stopped by a weedy freckle-faced sentinel, of a regiment recruited in one of the Baltic provinces, on the frosty macadam about a mile from the city walls. He was a stolid, coarse stripling, of the veritable food-for-powder class—nothing smart, nothing bright about him, but evidently a soldier who feared his officers, and would stand to his post as if he were chained there. He was warmly clad, wore thick worsted gloves and serviceable half-boots, into which the ends of his trousers were stuffed. His pack struck me as too heavy, and his patched greatcoat, and indeed all his belongings, exuded an overpowering greasy odour. A number of lively Frenchmen in blouses—probably peasants who had sought refuge in Paris from the

outskirts, and were anxious to have a look at the long-deserted rooftree—were carrying on a brisk conversation with him in the dumb language, aided by facial contortions and frantic gesticulations. But the briskness was all on one side. The Prussian sentry understood not a word, answered eloquent entreaties by a dry shake of the head, and would not let the pleaders violate his frontier by an inch. He had his orders, and he was bound to respect them. On the Parisian side of his post was a large wayside house, much knocked about, rising in the bare landscape. A speculative Frenchman had already taken possession of this ruin—perhaps it had been his property before the siege—and had set up a canteen. Prussian soldiers off duty flocked in there, and there was much chaffering going on and quiet interchange of *erbswurst* and other dainties of the Fatherland against bad brandy and worse tobacco. The commercial spirit proved stronger than the antagonism of race. The next day I went out by the gate of La Chapelle, which led on to the broad highway to St. Denis. This environ of Paris, always uninviting, was more

depressing and squalid than ever, and was knee-deep in slush from a recent thaw. A little beyond the bridge of the railway to Laon the German line was drawn. A strong post was installed there, and a cordon of sentries blocked the thoroughfare. They were big, athletic men, and apparently belonged to the Prussian Guard. They were very quiet, but very strict. A spectacled under-officer, who spoke French with an execrable accent, scrutinized the passes which were rammed into his hands by a multitude of poor persons, principally inhabitants of St. Denis, who had come in for asylum during the bombardment of the town, and were eager to return home again. The women, most of whom had no passes, were persistently importunate; but the Cerberus in glasses was not to be beguiled. Occasionally a sly adventurer would creep stealthily into the brown fields at either side and try to slip by the German flanks, but he was invariably hauled back roughly, amid the jeers or outcries of his countrymen, and sometimes his ears were cuffed. There was no possibility of bouncing or evading the impassive Germans. There they

stood like a live wall. For all their stone-like indifference, these guardsmen were watchful as mastiffs. When the crowd was swayed by the pressure of those behind and impinged upon the imaginary limit of Parisian territory, the spectacled under-officer would spread his arms and cry "*En arrière,*" the sentries would mutter a grim "*Zurück, zurück,*" and then force came into requisition, but no violence. The impatient crowd was thrust back with the rifle held horizontally in both hands against the breasts of those in front—thrust back placidly but with a disciplined doggedness that would take no denial. While some were cursing their fate that they could not get outside, to the land of plenty in sight, others were coming in, and a party of German officers were exercising their horses on the plain of St. Denis beside the road. Those officers in undress did not scruple to pass into the neutral zone. They were without swords, but doubtless they had revolvers in their pockets; and one daring fellow absolutely rode up to the gate of La Chapelle, and coolly surveyed the defences, the drawbridge, and the noisy National Guards on the

walls. I turned back hopelessly from this quarter and was astonished to catch up a clean-faced, tidily dressed German soldier, taking a walk on the pathway conducting to the ramparts. A drunken Frenchman staggered out of a house, stared at the uniform, cried "*Sacré Prussien*," and lurched against him. The Prussian lifted his right elbow, pushed it against the Frenchman's face, sent him sprawling into the mud, and quietly passed on, never uttering a syllable, nor altering his pace. A little further on I encountered a couple of spruce, white-gloved *Einjährige* (volunteers for one year's service), with the happy glow of health and pleasure on their young cheeks. They could not have counted more than thirty-six summers between them. Involuntarily I gazed at them, perhaps longer than I ought; they noticed me, and one turning round, with a ceremonious mock bow, said in French: "*Etes-vous content, Monsieur le Parisien? Nous sommes des hommes, rien que des hommes.*"\* And then they both laughed. How astonished

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\* "Are you satisfied, Mister Parisian? We are men, only men."

those sprightly youths were when I saluted courteously in return and replied : "*Vollkommen, meine Herren, aber ich glaubte wahrhaftig Sie wären noch Schuljungen.*"\* As I got back to the ramparts I was horrified to find that the drawbridge had been lifted. It was not more than four o'clock, but some extra timid or extra patriotic idiot of the civic force had taken into his head that the Germans were meditating an entrance into Paris by surprise through the opening. A string of carts and a mob of men, women, and children huddling against each other as protection against the cold, were massed opposite the gate, and kept up a chorus of expostulations, entreaties, and maledictions, varied by yells, jokes, and snatches of song. At last, just as the falling shades gave warning that six o'clock was not far off, and frightened us with the prospect of having to pass the night in the inhospitable No-Man's-Land outside, an officer had the common sense to let down the drawbridge.

That evening I dropped into Austin's restaurant,

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\* "Perfectly, gentlemen ; but, indeed, I thought you were only schoolboys."

in the Rue d'Amsterdam, and was astounded to meet there two colleagues from the other camp—Mr. Robert Coningsby, who corresponded for the *Echo*, and a Scottish gentleman whose name I forget. They were the first Great Britons to enter Paris, and they seemed to attach much importance to that historic fact. The chief object of their journey was to see how things really were, and to eat horse. They had passes, but it was a mystery to me how Coningsby, who rode in, escaped insult or injury. The Parisians, who had not had time to work themselves up to the orthodox fit of patriotic frenzy, may have fancied they were *parlementaires* or agents of the revictuallment. It was lucky for them they had got the hint to come to Austin's; for as they had with them German money only, there was every probability of their being kicked, skinned, and shredded, had they visited a café on their route and tendered the thrice-accursed coin of the enemy in payment for refreshment.

As I expressed a very great desire to get to Versailles in order to try and organize some readier mode of correspondence with London than the

vexatious one sanctioned by the Convention, Coningsby kindly said he thought he could manage it for me, if I would accompany him next day on his return to the German head-quarters.\* I gladly assented, was ready at the appointed hour, walking with the Scotchman beside our mounted colleague. I was to parry any observations that might be addressed to us inside Paris. Mr. Coningsby answered for what might occur beyond the French boundaries. We proceeded at a slow pace along the Champs Elysées and the Avenue of Neuilly to the bridge over the Seine, where France ended and Germany began. A thick press of excited individuals were battling to get out, but the Germans on duty were as inexorable as their countrymen at St. Denis. Coningsby alighted and asked me to mount. As I threw my leg over the saddle I noticed to my alarm the French Government brand on the animal's hind-quarters. It was an old troop-horse. If the people around noticed

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\* Article 15 of the Convention provided that a postal service for *open* letters would be organized between Paris and the departments through the medium of the head-quarters at Versailles.



it, we might have a very ugly quarter of an hour. Coningsby elbowed his way to the front, flourishing his pass, his Scotch friend along with him, and the Germans fairly pulled them through. Coningsby pointed to me and told a German that that was his horse, and a Mobile (who had no right to be there, as he was virtually a prisoner of war and condemned to the interior of the enceinte) caught the animal by the head and endeavoured to push it back. I made motions as if about to strike him. A Landwehrman immediately rushed to my rescue, pushed back the Frenchman, and, catching the bridle, dragged us through the barrier and across the bridge into safety on the other bank, where his comrades immensely enjoyed the rough-and-ready way in which the enemy had been checkmated, and burst into laughter. In the excitement of the moment they forgot to ask for my pass, and I gently slipped off the horse's back, and, at a wink from Coningsby, betook myself to a cottage with an open door a short distance up the road. Those honest hearty Germans might not have laughed so consumedly had they suspected that the equestrian

whom they had helped to cross into their territory had no authorization, and that he had given the price of a drink to the Mobile to work that scene of obstructing the horse in order to hoodwink them.

The cottage I entered presented me with a novelty that almost took my breath away.

There, scarce two hundred yards from the river, behind which was hunger unappeased, lay extended a huge carcase of prime freshly killed beef, pink, marbly and juicy, with broad skirts of clear white fat. I looked at it, not ravenously, not with admiration, but rather with a reproachful surprise. It was not easy to realize that plenty was so near to us, near, but not graspable, separated only by the artificial divisions—very rigid though—of brute force; and that while armed men here were licking canteens with the suspicion of meat in them, armed men there, apart but by a strip of stream, were smacking their lips in surfeited satisfaction. On one shore the desert; on the other Goshen. Torture of Tantalus! I looked at that carcase long, and by turns I felt angry, sickish, and inclined to weep. The

truth is, I was ill—very ill, for I had the unhappiness then to be afflicted with a most sensitive and excitable temperament, and it was only by great and most sober care I could hold my feelings in check. At length, by a strange but still comprehensible and indeed not unnatural channelling of thought, I wandered to Egypt and the bygone, and began to solve for myself some mysteries; among others, how the worship of Isis, to whom cows are sacred, came about. It must have had its origin somewhere, I reasoned as well as my heated brain could reason, at a siege where the faithful among the Egyptians were in sore straits for animal food. But Egypt is a hot country, and do not the Egyptians prefer vegetable diet? And then a legend I had heard once started up in some cerebellum-cranny and pursued me. It was, that Isis was the protectress of Paris; indeed that the name Paris, despite all that Rabelais has said to the contrary, was but a contraction of the Greek *Para Isidos*, and that on the site of the Panthéon was a temple of the goddess. If Paris, like Egypt, had worshipped—

“Aren’t you well, old fellow ?” broke in Coningsby.  
“You don’t look half fit.”

I had fallen into a drowsy reverie on a settle before that peerless vision of beef, but I roused myself at the brusque summons of my comrade.

“Here,” he continued, “we’ll ride and tie ; you better mount first, as you’re fatigued. We must be getting ahead, for night is coming on. Once at Versailles, and a good square meal under your belt, you’ll be all right.”

I thanked him, went out and mounted the horse. That horse needed no stimulant. Hardly had I fixed my toes into the stirrups, when he set off at a trot, which developed into a canter and a gallop, with as much regularity as if the trumpets were sounding the calls. I was too weak to hold him even had I wished to, but I was as anxious to “shake a loose leg” to convince myself that I was free again, as he was himself. He had been idle nigh forty hours ; he was impatient for his own stable and fodder. I was a light weight, and helter-skelter we pounded our way down a steep

incline with a sharp turn at the bottom, and as we hammered along I really began to get nervous. The gallop was becoming Gilpinish. I could not get a pull on my steed, so I applied myself to steadying him, and by dint of knee-play and sawing at his mouth, just managed to take the angle at the foot of the hill without stumble or spill. He seemed as if he had made up his mind for a rest (which I would not have given him had I spurs) when a whinny ahead resounded, and he cocked his ears, laid them back and dashed up the opposite hill, never stopping until he overtook a patrol of three German cavalymen about a quarter of a mile farther on, when the old troop-horse fell in as coverer to the blank file and accommodated himself to the march of the party. The Germans were respectable, civil, middle-aged men, stout and powerfully built. They looked upon my having overhauled them as the most ordinary occurrence, and entered into pleasant conversation. One of them spoke English very well. We talked about the weather, about our mounts, about Mr. Bancroft (the American representative at Berlin), whom they

regarded as a very good and learned man, and occasionally the fine fellows burst into a blithe *lied*. Twilight was descending as we marched, and by the white wall of a deserted house on the roadside one of the horses swerved and shied at a shadow and a scurrying noise. It must have been the flight of a disturbed rabbit or bird. That German did not curse; he patted the animal, talked to it soothingly, and rode it up to the wall, which he gently but decidedly compelled it to smell and inspect. There he remained for ten minutes schooling that horse patiently, and in the end he turned it back a few hundred yards and trotted it up the road and by the wall, which it passed without the slightest symptoms of unsteadiness. This little episode impressed me much, and it grew clearer to me why Germany had gained the mastery of France. There was a short halt after this lesson; the troopers lit their pipes, and while we were standing in the lee of a plantation, my fellow-travellers overtook me, and I exchanged into the infantry. Coningsby was too polite to say anything, but his shake of the head was graphically savage. We resumed our

march. At the sentinelled barrier of Versailles, where we arrived in the dusk, the circumstance of our entry with the patrol saved us from inquiry, so that it was lucky after all that the old troop-horse had taken the bit in his teeth.

## CHAPTER XI.

The German Imperial Headquarters — Spoiling the Egyptians—A Soured French Lady—Some Agreeable Compatriots—The Neptune Restaurant—Topsy Mars and Vexed Venus—An American Interviewer—The Besieged Resident—A Scoto-German Officer—Tit-for-Tat—Sweet Sleep—The Writer is Taken Down a Peg—Breakfast at the Réservoirs—A Noble Lordling—Mr. Blount's Mission—The "State of Subsistences" in Paris—Back to the Iron-bound City.

MY stay in Versailles did not exceed forty-eight hours. I knew the roomy, courtly suburb of old, when festive Paris repaired thither to watch the fountains play; but it was no longer the same pleasure-resort. German artillery was parked in the courtyard of the Château, and German sentries paced at its gates; the broad streets were empty, but for the occasional silent, tramping patrols; the principal promenade resembled an avenue in Pots-



dam, rather than one in the heart of vivacious France ; indeed, the whole place had the appearance of a vast barrack. The inhabitants held aloof from the garrison ; the only approach to civility between them was chill and forced ; the sole intercourse was of a business nature. The Germans were looked upon with aversion by the French ; and how could it be otherwise ? The tenant in a predicament does not warm to the man in possession ; he may cringe to him, but behind his back he will curse him. So it was in Versailles. The natives only cultivated the foreign invader that they might chouse him ; every penny extorted from his pocket was so much rescued from the enemy.

I stepped into a café by the theatre, and there were a couple of bulky cuirassiers of the Guard swilling beer. With the sweetest grace in the world the aimable girl at the bar asked them three times more for each glass of their liquor than I was paying for mine ; and when I smiled at her, she smiled at me, and screwed her pretty face into a frown as she darted a scowl of hate towards the Prussians.

“*Bon jour, messieurs, au revoir,*” she wafted after the ponderous fellows as they strode out with jingling spurs; and then, turning to a scullion, she cried :

“Jean, rinse out those glasses. The brutes ! I would sooner have their blood than their money.”

And yet the brutes may have been decent taxpayers, and popular—at home. Unjust though it was, I could not repress a sort of sneaking attraction towards the hypocritical little swindler. In the street I happened to ask my way politely of an elderly lady ; she gathered her mantle tightly round her, averted her face, and hurried on. I was annoyed, followed her, and asked again, still with a quiet politeness. She did not answer.

“Poor France !” I remarked loud enough to be overheard ; “has it come to this that she has lost her ancient courtesy with her military prestige ?”

She stopped, turned, gazed at me intently, and said :

“Then you are not a Prussian ?”

I noticed that she was in deep black.

“No, madame,” I answered ; “although a foreigner,

I am not a Prussian. On the contrary, I sympathize with your countrymen, and have shared in some of their sufferings."

"Pardon me if I was rude," she said, and her face softened; "but I have lost a son in this war. You were asking the way to ——, but you said you have shared in our sufferings. Where, pray?"

"I have just come out of Paris."

"*Vraiment!*" she ejaculated. "My poor, poor Paris!" and her eyes filled with tears. "Let me shake your hand, monsieur; again I ask you to pardon my apparent rudeness of a while ago. I will point you out the house you want."

The natives of Versailles, as far as I could perceive, especially the females, cherished profound and most patriotic antipathy to the Germans, whom they regarded as so many boorish interlopers saddled upon them by the evil fortune of war. They religiously avoided their society, and only condescended to tolerate them when they were able to coax coin out of their purses. The operation was not easy. I am sure no French family once asked a German princeling (how Serene a Transparency

soever he may have been) if he had a mouth on him; and I am prepared to swear no French girl offered her hand to a German officer to tread a measure, no matter how fine his shape, how bewitching the strains of the music, or how ardently she longed in her heart of hearts for a round dance. There were Frenchwomen who had emigrated from Paris—if those of their class can be called women, or accorded any nationality — with the declared object of “fleecing” the Germans. That was their idea of carrying on the war. They were disappointed. Where they demanded or expected golden Fredericks, they were offered silver groschen.

But here I am taking the bit in my teeth, like Coningsby’s charger, and running into anecdotes before I have related how I entered into the German Imperial provisional capital, and the reception I got there. The Hôtel des Réservoirs, a great re-echoing wilderness of a building in the main street, the principal house of entertainment, was the goal to which we directed our steps. The majority of the flying column of newspaper-correspondents had taken up their billet there. Some who were stand-

off in their notions had hired more pretentious apartments in private residences; and others, poorer but often quite as able and more painstaking, had sought frugal lodgings in some small tradesman's or mechanic's house. The Hôtel des Réservoirs was the rendezvous of the choicest in the craft—jolly companions every one, men of large experience and extensive knowledge of the world, retired officers many of them, accomplished at boxing, fencing, riding, sketching and writing, and always ready to join in the chorus of a song, to tell a good story, or to take a hand at cards. They welcomed me cordially, and at once made me free to their circle. Pleasant it was, after I had “made meagre” so long, to meet with lusty gentlemen, joyous with food and wine, kindly, and able to prove their kindness, and disposed to banter me into good spirits. The problem was, how had I succeeded in getting out of Paris without a permit?

“Bought himself a new hat and passed himself off as a candidate for the Constituent Assembly,” hazarded C——, my brave, big Highland friend C——, whose face still bore the bronzing of Mutiny

days, when he had done his duty loyally in the Central India Horse.

"What are you going to do now?" asked a rollicking naval lieutenant. "I'd advise you to get up an entertainment about the siege; Coningsby could lecture. You would be a deuce of a draw as the melancholy example."

Truth to say, I was a scraggy specimen of humanity, but already I felt that I would not take long to recuperate. I began to call up the delicious sensation a ticket-of-leave man may be supposed to experience when the dungeon-bolts are shot back, and he is handed the "key of the fields." The broad expanse of the Versailles park, the sight of turf and trees and moss, of hedgerows and evergreen shrubs, and the soft country air, had in them for me, exhausted as I was mentally and physically, a most grateful balm, a soothing refreshfulness as of an anodyne. It was like emerging from the close, vitiated atmosphere of a sick-chamber into the open air, with its healthy currents and its fragrance, and I wondered at myself that I had held up against the sufferings of my be-

leaguered existence so long and so well. My first thought, on arrival, was supper; and Coningsby introduced me to the Neptune restaurant as an excellent place to comfort the inner man. It was crowded, mostly by customers in uniform; and I noticed, to my surprise, that officers and privates were amongst the company. This may have been the combined effect of the familiarity campaigning brings about, and the equality of social grade resulting from conscription. But to one accustomed to the nice distinctions of the British service it was novel. There were many persons in civilian attire present. The majority of these were speculators, who had followed in the wake of the invading army, on the watch to make profit of the necessities of Paris, by supplying edibles as soon as the lines were reopened. As a general rule, they could play Shylock without masking their faces, and, as "sign particular," they carried samples of fine flour about with them in their pockets. I sat beside one, and the moment he heard I was a souvenir of the siege of Paris, he edged over, brought forth a little box of specimens of his merchandise, and was proceeding

to show its contents to me, when I rather disgusted him by the hint that I did not take snuff. However repulsive the enterprise of these fellows, its result was bound to be good under the circumstances. They had amassed immense quantities of grain and forage, and all things needful for man and horse, at places outside the German lines, and as the Government of Paris was giving them every facility for getting in their provisions, food-prospects were encouraging.

While waiting for something to eat, an instructive episode occurred. An athletic young German soldier entered, and called for a mug of beer. He was served, and was taking a swig at the liquor when a Frenchwoman belonging to the establishment passed him, and with a rude gallantry he clasped her round the waist. She indignantly slapped him in the face, and opened a volley of virtuous abuse upon him. He bowed and smiled, and drank her health, and, laying his hand upon his heart, assumed a most ludicrous, moon-struck, love-lorn air. In fact, he was in the good-natured stage of drunkenness. She stamped and swore like a very virago,



and the cook in his white cap bounded from a side-door and volubly harangued the Teuton. The outraged female, it appeared, was his wife. With the benevolent contempt of a Newfoundland dog for an irritated poodle, the soldier gazed placidly at the knight of the kitchen and put his fingers to his nose. The Frenchman fairly boiled over, and himself and his spouse joined in a perfect torrent of imprecations upon the foreign enemy. Suddenly an officer stepped from an inner room, and walked up towards the German. The latter stood to Attention. The officer took in the situation at a glance, told his countryman that if he did not clear out of the place in two minutes, he would have him marched to the guard-room, and retired to the cabinet where he had been seated with some companions before he was disturbed by the commotion. The soldier, who must have been a bit of a humourist out of his cups, deliberately took a watch from under his tunic, placed it upon the table beside which he was standing, and resumed his dumb-show of love-making to the lady and his grimaces at her lord and master, with an occasional

side-look at the watch. This comedy, which kept the assembly in a roar, went on for about a minute and a half, when a wag in a corner shuffled with his feet and raised a cry of "The officer!" With a farewell ogle at the Frenchwoman, and a final gesture of patronage at the cook, the soldier snatched up the watch, finished his beer at a gulp, and hurried out, tripping over the doorstep, and falling head over heels amid a chorus of unbounded merriment. What struck me most in this scene, apart from its painful exhibition of disdain for the conquered, was the unquestioning respect of the tipsy man for his superior, and the confidence he had in his word. The officer had threatened to have him arrested if he did not leave before two minutes; he interpreted that as licence to remain for one hundred and twenty seconds exactly, neither more nor less. If the limit were exceeded, he had the dead certainty that the guard-room was his doom.

Among the guests at this Neptune restaurant was an enterprising American journalist. We happened to be sitting beside each other. As I was

enjoying a post-prandial cigar, Coningsby having left, like a true cavalier, to look after the wants of his good steed. He got into conversation with me, remarking that he had not seen my face before.

"This is my first day here," I said.

"Army-contractor, I guess?" he continued.

"No such luck," I answered.

"Connected with one of the ambulances?" he persisted.

"Out again," said I. "What if I were a journalist like yourself?"

"You don't say so. Been with another army corps?" added my cross-examiner.

"No, I have been in and about this zone of operations since September."

"Well now! English?"

"Not quite."

"American? Not Chicago, I hope. I was thinking I had the pull of all the papers west of New York."

"Oh! make your mind easy," I replied; "I am no rival. I am connected with the London press."

He was relieved, and expanded as he offered me

a cigar, and confided to me that he rather admired the London papers; they had plenty of pluck, and spent lots of stamps, but they wanted go; they didn't know how to get up a boom. Why didn't they let themselves out? He declared he had never seen a scare-head in a London paper. For his part, if he had only half a chance, he would show them how to work up a sensation. Now, if he could only get hold early of any coon who had been in Paris——"

"I can oblige," I interrupted. "I have been there."

"Last September, I calculate," said my acquaintance.

"No later than this morning I left it."

The American looked at me, slowly ejected a puff of smoke, and ejaculated:

"Too thin."

"Yes," I assented, "they do say I look rather thin; but we were short of oil-cake during the siege."

He shook his head and murmured, as if in a dreamy soliloquy:

"I feel like giving a hundred francs for a Paris paper up to date."

I put my hand in my pocket, quietly produced a copy of *Les Nouvelles* I had bought in the Champs Elysées at leaving, and presented it to him. He looked at it and me twice, and then put his hand into his pocket and presented me with a crisp bank-note for a hundred francs. I flushed and pushed back the proffered reward, saying that I was not a newsvendor, but a dealer in brains, and that as a colleague he was welcome to any information I could impart, so long as it did not interfere with the interests of the journal to whose staff I was attached.

I was young then and haughty, and foolishly felt insulted. If that bank-note were offered to me now, I fancy I would pocket the insult. The American stared at me, half in pity, half in admiration, apologized, shook hands heartily, and insisted that I should liquor up—yes, sir, I should have the best the house afforded. And then a crisis in my existence arrived. For the first time I was interviewed, which, I take it, is the modern equivalent

for the torture known as "putting to the question." I trust my narratives of disastrous chances, moving accidents, hair-breadth escapes, and the rest, were far more conscientious than those with which Mickey Free favoured the editor of the *Bristol Telegraph*; but I decline to give my affidavit to that effect. One of the first interrogations my inquisitor put to me was:

"Do you know the Besieged Resident?"

The Besieged Resident? Was I not one? Why the definite article? The phrase was as inscrutable to me as a cuneiform inscription, and I so admitted.

"Ah, sir," remarked the American sententially; "by the great United States, he is a live man!"

I was in the middle of a dissertation on boiled dog, drawing lively contrasts between the whiteness of the fat and the pale red of the lean, when a deputation from my Highland friend hurried me back to the Réservoirs. There was a convivial little party in his room, mostly of military men, and we had an animated discussion on the professional aspects of the siege. It was all over now, and I gave them my frank opinion that Paris could have been

taken by a *coup de main* on the 19th of September ; but that after a few weeks any attempt to carry it by assault would involve a dreadful sacrifice of life, and might eventuate in a couple of failures. It would not be enough to seize one fort without neutralizing the fire of the two forts adjoining, which could be brought to bear upon it ; and even with these forts in their occupation, the enceinte could offer a desperately tough opposition—if defended with spirit. Of course, the place could be taken by force—we all agreed upon that—but the wiser and more economic plan had been adopted ; and, indeed, it was a moot point if von Moltke had not hit on the speediest plan to bring the city under. I rather amused some of my auditors by the dogmatic way in which I laid down that the sooner we equipped our troops with spades as well as rifles, disbanded our heavy cavalry, and put the whole standing-army through big gun drill the better.

“What ! Disband the heavy cavalry !” echoed a tall, big-boned stripling, in white cuirassier tunic and great jack-boots, entering at the moment. “We were some use at Vionville all the same.”

It was C——'s brother, a gallant boy who had run away from school at Berlin to serve in the Prussian army in the campaign against Austria, had won the Iron Cross, and had afterwards been persuaded to enter a Military Academy to qualify for a commission in a crack corps. At the desperate charge of Rheinbaben's troopers into the thick of the hostile gunners, on the 16th of August, 1870, he had been left for dead beside his horse; but youth and his hardy Scottish breeding had saved him, and in a few months he was back in the saddle again, eager for duty. But so terribly had he been crushed and battered that the surgeons had to case him in leather to keep him together. On looking at him sharply, I recognised the daring officer who had ridden up to the gate of La Chapelle a few days before.

"Yes," he said; "I was over at St. Denis to see a few friends, and on my way back one of those scoundrelly Freeshooters took a pot-shot at me from a plantation;" and he went off into a rumble of guttural German maledictions on the rascally cowards and plunderers who masqueraded as guerillas and fired on isolated men.

How the Germans hated and despised these Free-



shooters! Upon them they laid the responsibility of every excess; and, indeed, I believe these irregulars did more damage to their own countrymen than to the enemy. They were not famous soldiers; they had small skill in the use of arms, most of them, and no discipline; but they had one excuse—they were fighting for fatherland. If they were arrayed on the German side, under similar circumstances, the Germans would have called them patriots. The way of the world.

Young C—— strode off to bed, and an under-officer entered for a chat with my host. This was a gentleman who had been in business in the City of London when the war broke out. He had an exquisite taste in Sèvres porcelain, and liked to add to his collection cheaply.

“Somebody has come into the hotel who was not here this morning,” he said. “It’s all right as far as he is concerned, C——, since he is a friend of yours” (nodding at me), “but I’ll have it out of the hotel-keeper for omitting to enter the stranger’s name on his list. He will be fined, and I’ll have satisfaction for his overcharges. Tit for tat.”

How admirably those Germans were served, even to the minutest detail! I had flattered myself that I had got into Versailles unobserved, but my arrival had been reported, and my movements watched until the fact of my call on the brother of a German officer had been perceived; and then it was assumed that I was harmless. Still my presence might not have been passed over so quietly had there not been a firm understanding that peace had already been tacitly proclaimed.

Before I parted from C—— that night, to seek the shakedown Coningsby had promised me in his room, my friend said:

“Old man, we are going to give you a complimentary breakfast to-morrow. By-the-bye, did you often come across Labby inside? Awfully clever chap, that Labby.”

Labby! The word to me was pure Ogham. It might have stood for a parlour-conjurer or a dog-faced baboon.

“I see you didn’t. Ta-ta. Sleep well, and wake with an appetite.”

I did not sleep well at first. I missed the echoes of

the artillery and the heaving life-drapery—a species of heavy upholstery of atmosphere, which one instinctively feels in the heart of a great city, with its compressed hum of existence, its manifold breathings and sighs, its subtile odours, its fulness, and that indefinite, ever-present consciousness that souls are about like atoms in a light-cone. How tranquil, how soothing, how rural and refreshing those sweet murmurs and scents that stole in from the wide green park of Versailles, the lullaby of whispering trees and plashing waters, after the sweat and strife and goblin clamour of the crowd. I shut my eyes and lapsed into the languorous border-land between reverie and slumber, and by insensible degrees I dropped into a golden repose, deep, dreamless, and more delightful than if my pillow had been softest of gossamer instead of a cavalry valise, and my bed the fleece of Colchis instead of three hard chairs.

A tapping at the door next morning awoke me. It was a waiter with hot water for Mr. Coningsby's ablutions. Hot water! What luxurious sybarites those sojourners in Versailles must be, I reflected.

While my colleague was dressing I asked him who or what the Besieged Resident was?

“Why, Labby, they say. Haven’t you met him?”

“And who is Labby?”

Coningsby stared as he explained to me that Labby was Mr. Henry Labouchere, who had written a series of letters under the heading of “The Diary of a Besieged Resident,” of the wit and shrewdness of which letters everybody was speaking. He wound up by denominating him, in the language of Artemus Ward, “An amoosin’ cuss.” So this was the key of the enigma which had perplexed me. Labby! Endearing but too familiar diminutive. That might pass; but “an amoosin’ cuss!” I would as soon think of calling Diogenes in a dress-coat a dear old chappie.

I was bursting with anxiety to ascertain what was the judgment on my letters. Had they got out pretty regularly? Did they set the Thames on fire? But nobody made the slightest reference to them. At last I could contain myself no longer, but put it to Coningsby point-blank. What did he think of my correspondence?

"Some of it was very fairly done," he said, as he whipped up a lather; and then, perceiving a shade of mortification shoot over my face—indeed, tears of disappointment almost rose (we all have our little vanities)—he added, in a kindly tone, "some of your letters were confoundedly smart."

And this was my reward of fame after all my risks, racks, and privations, loss of health and flesh, and the mental wear and tear of that woeful winter. To be told, through pure good-nature, that I had occasionally risen to the height of being "confoundedly smart," but, on the whole, that I had done very fairly! At that time I had as lief be kicked as damned with faint praise. I am pachydermatous now. Experience has taught me that the approval of conscience, the feeling that one has done his duty to the best of his ability, outweighs all outside reputation. And in this special correspondent craft, the race is not always to the swift. The cunning or the lucky more often come to the front. In my career I have won unexpected panegyric sometimes when I did not try, "fluked" points in short; and sometimes when I have worked myself

to the bone, striven against sleep and illness, my recompense has been sour looks or curt notes, and "My dear O'S." has come down at a run to formal "Sir."

I went to the window, partly to hide the working of my countenance; and as I looked out, a sight revealed itself so novel and grateful that I forgot everything else. To me it was lovely. There was a smooth carpet of sward on the spacious free tract of the French Royal pleasaunce, clumps of evergreens, and masses of sombre tree-foliage, neatly gravelled paths, and the historic basin of Neptune.

"Ah!" cried Coningsby, "we had some capital skating there while you fellows were perishing with cold a few weeks ago."

The wind soughed plaintively among the lime-branches in the long forest colonnades of the park. What figures are those? The dark silhouettes of a small body of men, marching with cadenced step, had caught my attention.

"Those are the Prussians relieving their sentries."

Yes, under the very sylvan patriarchs which had

looked down on the grace and gallantry of the Court of the Grand Monarque. The building which sheltered me—a tavern for the invader to-day—was a gift from the King to the Pompadour. I thought how I had dined in the house where another favourite, La Vallière, was born, at Tours, in the summer of 1870. How France had changed within that short space, less than a year! A metallic bang on one of the mullions of the window roused me from my meditations. I drew back startled, and I must admit somewhat alarmed, for the trials I had passed through did not steady the nerves. Coningsby laughed.

“That is Hall’s signal that breakfast ought to be ready. He lives in the room above, and lets down the tongs by a string.”

A few moments afterwards I had the pleasure of meeting an acquaintance of the opening of the campaign, Mr. Sydney Hall, of the *Graphic*, and we sallied out for our meal; for he was one of my hosts at that repast where I was to be lionized—a spare, melancholy, small lion at the best. We had there a noble lordling who was doing the grand tour with

his bear-leader, an Ottoman diplomatist (now Gadban Effendi), a naval lieutenant since well known as a machine-gunner, C——, and some half-dozen correspondents, the most prominent of whom was an oddity who hated the Prussians and all Germans like sin, and bragged that he had once the felicity of dancing a jig on the corpse of a Bavarian in a railway waggon. The noble lordling divided courtship with myself. I was glad of it, for I was shy and qualmish. The conversation of his lordship was almost as improving as if he were a head-lad in a Newmarket training-stable. He discoursed very learnedly about jockeys and thoroughbreds, and little else. Luxuries that took my senses away were abundant on the board; but somehow they did not tickle my palate. I had no appetite, and made a poor breakfast. The morning previous, February the 1st, I had drawn my coarse pittance of horse-flesh, munched my pennyworth of sandy bread, and had a treat of green meat in the shape of sorrel dressed with colza-oil. This morning I had before me game-pie, sweetbread with toast, white rolls, a hissing urn of tea, and a number of



minor delicacies, arranged on a spotless cloth of white damask. So artistically was everything cooked, and so well trained the attendants, that I might have fancied myself under the mahogany of Verrey's in Regent Street, London. There was the rare champagne of Pfungst upon the table, and purple wines, still and sparkling, of France and of the Rhineland, and liquors *go leor* ;\* but I declared in favour of a glass of pale ale. Two or three times the moisture came welling to my eyes. I was in a wretched condition of physical health, and excessively nerve-strung, but I managed to conceal my feebleness. As we quitted the cabinet where I had been going through the motions of gorging myself, C—— called me aside and warned me to take care of myself, as I did not look at all fit ; I needed rest, and he would be happy to do any work for me. “Do you know you pocketed the remnant of that roll you were picking, as we left the table ?” It was true. I had forgotten that I was no longer in Paris. A few minutes later Mr. Gadban touched

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\* *Anglicè*, “galore,” in abundance. I restore the right spelling.

me on the elbow and asked me did I want any money ; he would let me have fifty or a hundred pounds, if I chose, on my simple acknowledgment. All of these good fellows were most friendly to me ; but I declined their proffers. It was my business to get back to the Rue de Clichy, and I had determined to stick to my post and struggle on with my work to the end. As for money, I had a trifle left, and was certain of subsidies soon, without incurring obligations.

On the 3rd of February, the line of railway communication with Paris was partially re-opened, and a favoured few were enabled to visit us in search of news and provender. I met Mr. Blount, the banker, who had so faithfully acted, not only as British representative during the siege, but as almoner to distressed British subjects. He had come in from the capital to have an interview with Mr. Odo Russell, and his words to his countrymen will have significance for those who imagine that the sufferings of the beleagured city have been overdrawn in these pages. Here they are textually given :

“For God’s sake, gentlemen, it is to be hoped

supplies will soon turn in, for poor Paris is literally famishing !”

The aged gentleman himself was a breathing example of the truth of what he said ; he was weak, agitated and despondent, and so unhinged was he that there were tears in his voice as in his eyes. I have often heard people since make light of what Paris had undergone, and complain that they must have been cheated out of their sympathy because, forsooth, when they penetrated into the place after the revictuallment, they saw houses on the boulevards and shops open, and partook of meals well served in the eating-houses. They had hoped to have had the singular joy of shaking hands with living skeletons, and peeping at the stars through the fissured roofs of houses. My experience is that a bombardment is much worse while it is going on than the day afterwards, and that it is as difficult for a turtle-fed alderman to appreciate the gnawings of hunger, as for a strong-jawed gymnast with nerves of steel to realize the torments of *tiedouloureux*. But who cares for the critics anyhow ? The best actors are not always in the pit of

the Lyceum Theatre, nor the best cricketers on top of the cabs outside the enclosure of Kennington Oval.

It will be profitable to record the actual "state of subsistences" as officially reported when the capitulation was resolved upon—profitable, that is, if it remind martially disposed individuals of what war entails when they are tempted to shout, "On to the metropolis of Proxima Thule!"

There had been 100,000 horses at Paris before the investment; on the 27th of January there were just 33,000, comprising those of the cavalry and of the ambulances, and those required to transport flour and fuel round the town for the living, and to carry the dead to their graves. Besides, when the relief would come, it was absolutely necessary to have some to bring in the stores which had been prepared outside. At the very most, then, when these indispensable services had been provided for, there were not more than 22,000 animals at the disposal of the butcher. The hospitals and soup-kitchens consumed a large quantity of horse-flesh daily; an army had to be nourished if it must fight;

the allowance for civilians was docked to as low a ration as it could be—less than an ounce avoirdupois per diem—so that a gap of 650 was made in the ranks of the stock of hoofed cattle for the shambles every sun that rose. But the bread was failing; for weeks we had been living on a composition made up of rye, rice, barley, oats, bran, wheat, and sand. It was an act of courtesy to call this *mélange* bread, yet there were no pinings, except against its scarcity. Three-fifths of a pound of this mixtum-gatherum stuff was very poor nutriment for a growing boy or an adult with a healthy appetite. If the bread were reduced the meat should be proportionably increased, and there was bread for no more than twelve days. That was the exact state of the case; so the historian of the siege will have no reproaches to address to Paris on the score of having borne its privations badly, if he tell the tale with impartiality. In fine, we had just enough to keep body and soul together to February; and if a gleam of hope had brightened the horizon the city would have cheerfully protracted the resistance so long. I will even go further, and say that there was a

possibility—a possibility which bordered on heroism—of holding out to the middle of the month. But then there was one terrible hazard: the grain in store had to be ground into flour as it was wanted; the mills were established in Cail's foundry, where the new cannon had been cast, and Cail's foundry very naturally was a *point de mire* for the German artillerymen. Several shells had fallen there, and a chance shot might kindle a fire at any moment that would "imperil the alimentation of the entire city." That was the official statement, and a disgraceful statement it was to have to make. From these statistics it follows that Paris held out as long as it could, and could not hold out a day longer with safety. And all this time that 2,000,000 of human beings were being put through the slow process of starvation, corn was plentiful in the country beyond the outposts, the chargers of the German cavalry were glossy-hided and wrinkled with fat, and military and civilians at Versailles were luxuriating on the flesh-pots of Egypt!

How to return to Paris was a problem. As I strolled out to think it over, I noticed the little

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lordling in the courtyard of the hotel. He was the centre of an admiring circle of English grooms and stable-helpers, the hangers-on of the correspondents. All their wizened features glowed with that warmth which the presence of a born aristocrat sheds over the plebeian mind, heightened, perhaps, by the cheerful anticipation of palm-oil. A hum of animated conversation came from the half-open window of the great dining-hall of the Réservoirs. Within were assembled at table a gorgeous gathering of officers. It was the same living book I had admired at the Europe Hotel of Metz at the opening of the war—the same, but in different binding. There the uniforms were rich in gold and garance; here the pervading tints were black or blue and silver. Where there had been marshals, here there were princes. They had not the gaiety or the careless air of the French; but they were larger men, better set-up, sturdier, tightly buttoned if thick-waisted, and there was a grand self-important formality.

C——stood my Mentor. A messenger was about to go to Paris to the American Minister, and I was permitted to engage myself temporarily in his

service as valet. We rattled off almost immediately in a calèche, and after a couple of hours' journey by the deserted and desolate road, passing by German posts, market-tenders' waggons, dilapidated houses and the remains of barricades, reached the bridge of St. Cloud, where I shouldered my master's portmanteau. His official envelope with the massive red seal of the United States was "open sesame," and I followed unquestioned.

"*Ma foi !*" said a young Mobile officer who was on the bridge, "these democratic Americans have bizarre tastes in servants. That is the first time I ever saw one with kid-gloves and a *pince-nez* !"

At the other side of the barrier I dismissed myself from servitude, bade my late master good-bye, and trudged along to my quarters. The city was strangely quiet, with a graveyard quietude. There were clouds of wrath or mourning on every face. Paris was not happy, and no wonder. She was a widowed Paris ; flowers were faded and jewels dim, and her dress was sad-coloured ; but, nevertheless, she was very beautiful in her tribulation, with a subdued sort of beauty. Except in the neighbour-



hood of the clubs, all was calm, and the cross was borne with fortitude and dignity. Since news had reached from England of the sympathy for what France and its capital had undergone, there was a reaction in public opinion, and Englishmen were now looked upon with favour, and next week might be looked upon with fraternity. But who can foretell the changeful moods of Paris? As well might one trust the sunshiny surface of an unruffled Bay of Biscay.

## CHAPTER XII.

A Seasonable Leg of Mutton—The Revictualment—Windbagery—The Cannon that never Spoke—Draping the Statues—An Avenue of Mourning—"Which Regiment?"—The *Einzug*—Germany in Paris—What the Arch of Triumph Suggested, which Ends this Chronicle.

THIS, the last, will be the briefest chapter of my book. My theme was Paris iron-bound, and now Paris was iron-bound no longer. The railways were re-opened one after another, a goods-train with flour steamed in, a flock of sheep was driven in, and the fear of death by starvation was allayed. A convoy of provisions from England was announced, and the English rose to floodtide of popularity. My first personal relief came from my brave friend C——, who rode in from Versailles with a leg of mutton at his saddle-bows, although I had been eased in mind before his opportune arrival by an open letter from my sister at Gravesend, intimating that she had sent

on a hamper of delicacies that would keep—York hams, rounds of cheese, Reading biscuits, and the like; but by the time they came to the address, the tension had slackened. Nick Walsh was asked to assist at the dissection of that leg of mutton, and what a feed he and O'Donovan and I had, the while C—— looked on and smiled! An English restaurant-keeper had managed to cross to London, and returned with a freight of edibles, and what I valued almost as much—a stock of newspapers and gossip. Again harping on that ever-recurring question of the interest taken in my letters—to me the first of all subjects—I sounded him. He gave me no more satisfaction than I had received at Versailles. All London was talking about two pamphlets, “The Row in Dame Europa’s School” and “The Battle of Dorking;” they were so awfully talented and original. And—oh yes!—there was that capital “Diary of a Besieged Resident.” Pilgarlic’s contributions to siege literature had floated unperceived, and poor Pilgarlic metaphorically bit his nails.

The elections were the topic of excitement, *vice*

dearth, forgotten quickly as the twinges of a diseased tooth which has been drawn. I am no friend of universal suffrage; I do not grant that Magot, the concierge, should have an equal share in the choice of the administration with the lodger on his first floor, a man of education, of travel, one who has a stake in the commonwealth, and who has given hostages for the faith that is in him. Universal suffrage is a system with many taints, and fosters the political ambition of blatant mediocrity—impotence, impudence, chimera. My prejudices are in favour of the democracy that earns its bread and wears clean linen. Forty-seven deputies were to be sent to the Assembly from the department of the Seine, and what a Falstaffian crew presented themselves as suitors for the popular favour !

Major Flourens; Napoleon Gaillard, the cobbler; a printing-machine maker, whose motto was, "Go ahead" (all the English he knew); Coquerel the elocutionist; and a grandson of Rouget de l'Isle, whose sole claim was that he was his grandfather's grandson, and that his grandfather had composed the "Marseillaise."

There were more serious candidates, some even illustrious; such as Thiers, Hugo, About, and Quinet, Generals Chanzy and Faidherbe, Admirals Saisset and Pothvau, Protestant pastors, military writers, and the President of the Council of Notaries.

The Positivist Association, consisting of people who believed themselves to be disciples of Auguste Comte, came forward with its appeal to the free and enlightened. The Positivists took "Order and Progress" as their watchwords. Their positive value may be better appreciated when one learns that their president was one Magnin, a joiner; that an influential committee-man was a working gilder; and that a worthy, named Mollin, a shining light of the International (strike and turn-out) Association, was one of their stump-speakers. But the grotesque aspirants after seats in the council of the nation should not be left unnoticed. Foremost among these was Dr. Poupon, the author of a queer book on the art of eking out life on easy terms. He was just the man for the situation before the armistice. Another eccentric worthy

was the irrepressible archi-maniac, M. Gagne. The platform on which he took his stand had the merit of originality, at all events. M. Gagne, if you please, was a Republican, but a large-hearted archi-universal Republican; and so benevolent in his views that he would be willing to make the King of Prussia first president of the first archi-universal Republic. Fall back, M. Gagne! There is a proverb anent Greeks and their gifts; not that you are the one, or what you offer the other; but in moments of perilous agony for a nation the braying of asses may be dangerous as the bellowing of lions.

What boots it now who was elected or who was not? Most of the notabilities of an hour are forgotten; some are dead; a few are immortal, with a greater or lesser measure of what is known as immortality. For the purpose we have here, it suffices that the Assembly met at Bordeaux, that there was babble and bickering, and that after Thiers had been in conclave with Bismarck at Versailles the preliminaries of peace were concluded on the 26th of February, 1871. Before that

consummation could be arrived at, Thiers had much trotting about, and the armistice had to be twice prolonged. One of the conditions was, that the Germans should make an entry into Paris by instalments; but it was represented to the Parisians that this was the price of the fortress of Belfort. The steel-bright cannon for which the public subscriptions had been sought, and which never fired a shot, were dragged from the Park of Monceaux to Belleville. "Folly!" I exclaimed to a few strong men, whom I saw perspiring at the task. "No: they are the property of the people." They did not know what I meant; but folly it was, as the sequel proved when the Commune rose and those cannon were pointed at the breasts of Frenchmen; and Paris, with the Germans as spectators, became like to Issachar, "a strong ass crouching down between two burdens."

After repeated false notices of the triumphal entry of the Germans, it was at last signified that that crowning and tangible proof of victory would be given on the 1st of March, but that their troops would respect the Boulevards. The occupation was

to be limited to the quarter in and around the Champs Elysées, and was not to extend beyond the Place de la Concorde. And on the 28th of February, some Parisians, theatrical to the eleventh hour and after, draped the statues to French cities on the noble open space with swathings of black, and veiled their faces with crape.

In as few sentences as may be, I shall dismiss the pageant which was such an abasement to the haughty capital. The *einzug* was fixed for one o'clock, and O'Donovan and I arranged to take time by the forelock and meet the Germans. The day was bright and dry. Before nine o'clock we went to the Champs Elysées, and were quietly walking towards the Arch of Triumph, when I noticed some cavaliers in hussar uniform advancing. My friend said they were French, probably told off to clear the ground. But there was no room for illusion as they came nearer. The horses were in good condition; the men were well appointed. They were the enemy. Two by two they came along, on the borders of the broad thoroughfare, the roadway separating them; the leading files had



their carbines at the carry, the next their swords drawn, and so on in alternation. The intervals were long, the pace slow, and as the head of each side-street was gained, a trooper cantered down it to reconnoitre. Every military precaution was taken. The countenances of the riders were set and anxious. There was an impressive silence as this opening scene of the drama was enacted. The Avenue was deserted, shops were shut, and blinds down in the windows of private houses. Here and there the flags of different nationalities hung out, proclaiming that the property underneath was neutral. I leant against a tree, and as the foremost German passed, I asked in a whisper: "*Welches Regiment?*"

The young soldier fairly jumped in his saddle, and turning a smiling glance towards me as he paced onwards, murmured under his breath, "*Zweite*."\*

These pioneers of the temporary occupying Division, as I afterwards learned, were the first squadron of the Second Hessian Hussars, com-

\* "What regiment?" "The second."

manded by Rittmeister von Colomb. To the men of Cassel, but three miles from that Wilhelmshöhe where the third Napoleon was a prisoner, was the precedence in the historic event assigned. After they had reported all right, the first battalion of the Second Nassau Infantry tramped in under Major Heye, the drum-major at their head insolently tossing his staff, and the drummers and fifers lilting a merry quick-step. They halted opposite the Palais de l'Industrie, and there they remained, some eight hundred men, for four hours. We walked up as far as the Arch of Triumph. A French gentleman was repairing a broken chain round the base of the monument with a bit of twine! Continuing our promenade through the lonely street—it was as if the plague were about, everything was so still and melancholy—we reached the Porte Maillot where a few unhappy French *Douaniers* kept watch and ward. On a mound outside the gate I encountered Mr. James Lynam Molloy, a companion of University days. We had not met for years, and we arranged to return, as the entry of the main body would not take place

for hours. On regaining the Arch of Triumph, a part of the second regiment of the Guard Landwehr was established there. The veterans were already making themselves at home. They had replaced the *Pickelhaube* with the cap, divested themselves of the *Ajfe* or rolled-up mantle, laid their knapsacks on the ground, piled their arms, and were smoking or eating. A group of French blouses of the lowest classes and street-urchins had collected, and as an officer stepped out to take a closer view of the Arch of Triumph, these blackguards swarmed round him, and one spat on the back of his uniform. A young Prussian gendarme, who was at hand, spurred his charger into the mob, laid the flat of his sword on the caitiff's shoulder, and quickly dispersed the roughs and rescued his countryman. The officer calmly directed a file of the Landwehr to fix bayonets, and as they charged the civilians, the latter fled with a marvellous celerity. As we strolled along we noticed a café open, the Marignan it was called, and entered for a cup of coffee. A party of Bavarian officers were breakfasting there. A group

of indignant Frenchmen gathered outside, and as soon as the Bavarians left, they proceeded to demolish the windows with volleys of stones. The proprietor was compelled to put up his shutters, and a denunciation of him as a traitor was immediately scrawled on them boldly with charcoal. Mr. Molloy and I took up our quarters in a mansion near the Rond Pont, in order to enable the lady who owned it to hoist a neutral flag.

We whiled away the minutes of waiting in chatty reminiscences of youth. My old friend, who had made a reputation as a composer since I had parted with him, whistled me "The Vagabond," at my request. And then he excited my envy by showing me an Ulster coat (the first I had ever seen), and by making some beef-tea with Liebig's extract of meat. Suddenly rose on the sunny air the strains of magnificent brass-music. The Germans were approaching. What a solid and stately array of puissant legions, the modern hammers of the earth, thundering by with gallant mien, their war-worn silken battle-flags waving over their heads. On they marched with steady ranks, strong, straight as

spears, beaming with pride, for well-nigh two hours—grenadiers, *jägers*, dragoons, lancers and giant cuirassiers—to spirit-stirring notes, clash of cymbal and beat of drum; and anon clattered past at a gallop a battery of field artillery. The spectacle was one of the most thrilling I had ever witnessed. As I came out and walked towards the Triumphal Arch, inscribed with a long catalogue of French victories, a Landwehr officer stood beneath it with folded arms, and studied them with a curious expression on his face.

“*Jena und Ostalenka*,” he read, curling his lips; and then, as he looked down the broad avenue gleaming with a forest of German bayonets, he added with a throb of exultation: “*Na, die haben wir auch nicht vergessen!*”

They, too, had not forgotten Jena and Ostalenka. It was true as gospel.

THE END.











